

# The Prevention and Cure of Old Age



Eleanor Kirk

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# THE PREVENTION AND CURE OF OLD AGE

BY

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"Influence of the Zodiac upon Human Life," "Libra,"  
"Perpetual Youth," etc.



PUBLISHED BY  
**ELEANOR KIRK**  
696 GREENE AVENUE  
BROOKLYN, N. Y.

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# THE PREVENTION AND CURE OF OLD AGE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### A DOUBLE BONDAGE.

THERE is nothing beautiful about old age, because there is nothing beautiful about decay. There isn't a single person on this planet who wants to be old, and there isn't a single young person alive who desires to be the companion of old age. Affection, filial duty, and gratitude may lead us to be very tender to the tottering steps and weak wills of the helpless ones under our care; but, however kind and fond we may be, there is always a protest in our souls against such failure of the life forces. We weep when these dear ones yield their last breath, but all the same we experience a sense of relief. It is

inevitable. They are in bondage, and we are bound with them. Indeed, for all these ages the human race has been doubly bound—bound to be the daily witnesses of decay in others, and by the expectation of decay for themselves.

Old age has never had a single logical leg to stand upon. Because it has been considered inevitable, it has been bolstered up by sentiment and trimmed with flowers of rhetoric, much on the same principle that induces us to cover the coffins of our friends with buds and blossoms. Death is hideous, and so we draw as comforting a curtain over the scene as nature and art can devise.

Poets have sung of the “sweet fading out of the body,” “the gradual and beautiful release of the spirit,” while striving with all the power they possessed to delay the beautiful release for themselves. As long as death had to be, versification was as good a setting for it as any other; and like the boy who whistled when he passed the graveyard, they have rhymed decay and cannot stay, and fade and shade, and die and sky, in the vain attempt to

keep up their courage. If all the old-age and death poems and death essays were taken out of the language, the books remaining in our libraries to be dusted would be perceptibly diminished, to the great good of all concerned, housekeepers included.

This treatment of negative and undesirable conditions has been called "making the best of things," "making the best of a bad bargain," "submitting to the inevitable"; and every fresh endeavor to become reconciled to them has added to the burden of our wretchedness. This belief in the necessity of sickness, old age, poverty, and death rolled up and rolled up until it became so large and so unwieldy that in the effort to continue turning over it has crumbled here and there, leaving little heaps of dirt for spiritual geologists to speculate about. Their investigations started a new school, and this school has divided into scores of classes, every one of them intent upon demolishing this colossal bundle of error. It is still rolling by the force of its own momentum, but the stones of truth which are constantly being fired into it will ultimate-

ly destroy it. Every day the blows are more efficient because the aim is better, and because a few thinkers are tireless in this work of bombardment.

Among the rest of the things which we have been told to do is the impossible one of "growing old gracefully." This phrase has doubtless been incorporated into almost every language under the sun; here was more whistling in passing the graveyard. It gave the decaying man or woman a little diversion in the matter of buying silver-headed canes, and in selecting the shawl or the gown which would best harmonize with the lustreless eyes and faded cheeks. It said to them: "Make yourself as contented as you can in externals. True, you must grow old and older until you sink into the grave. You have plenty of company, so brace up and think as little about the disgusting process as possible. Show your superiority to the situation by growing old gracefully."

Now, who ever saw anybody grow old gracefully? We have seen our friends submit graciously and uncomplainingly—more's the

pity—to what they believed they could not help. They have called it God's will, as they have limped and tottered toward the grave; but it hasn't been a pretty sight, a comforting sight, a graceful process. We turn our faces away in sorrow. They don't like it, and we cannot bear to behold it in others or anticipate it for ourselves. And this failing and fading and suffering and dying is God's will—the fiat of a loving Father. What an awful accusation to bring against the All-Good, and how strange that such a falsehood could have been for ages perpetuated!

A great many people argue that old age must be a natural process, and point to external nature for their proof. The flowers, they tell us, bud, blossom, and fall to pieces, the trees put forth their leaves, and after a brief space the wind sighs through bare branches. The grass withers, and fruit having come to maturity decays.

Well, what if they do? Man is a living soul, made in the image and likeness of God, and trees and grass and fruit and sunshine and flowers are for his delectation. He is the

absolute owner and master of these things. He always has been "monarch of all he surveyed," and all the time has walked the earth like a beggar. He has chained the lightning and made the earth produce a million things that would once have been considered in the light of miracles, and yet he is not conscious of his power and supremacy. The unit of nature was his to start with, but by the force of his God-will and intelligence—both entirely unrecognized—he has added so many ciphers to it as literally to have created a new heaven and a new earth. And still he is ignorant and goes travelling toward the cemetery, because the pace has been set for him by a few prehistoric idiots.

The stories of decay and death are the first things a child makes acquaintance with. These dismal impressions are deepened and strengthened as the years go by, and a note of anguish runs through every moment of existence, no matter what the apparent or anticipated happiness. It sings these minor strains, "Old age is approaching," and "Man is of few days and full of trouble."

Is it any wonder that every old negative thing that we have no use or wish for seems to be in universal operation?

Personally I find great comfort and inspiration in certain parts of the Bible. But I have never had any patience with those old fogies who talked about all flesh being grass, and the few days full of trouble. We cannot deny the last statement, but who is responsible for the brevity of the hours and the misery that fills them? Why, man himself; but these ancient scribes had no hint of this truth. Once in a while it dawned upon David, and then he would dance a gig and chant the psalms of joy that have vibrated all along the ages. At other times he would declare that he was "a pelican of the wilderness," and "like an owl of the desert," and all "because of thy indignation and thy wrath, for thou hast lifted me up and cast me down."

Contrast this pessimistic doggerel with the grandeur and glory of the ninety-first psalm: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

But we must not blame our old friends too much. The pace had been set for them as for us, and they knew no better than to limp along the same road that the generations before them had travelled. It was "Thus saith the Lord," and this Lord was sitting upon a throne somewhere in the sky, ready to be propitiated if the right sort of a petition was prayed up to him. This was the prayer of faith, and very few knew how to formulate it.

So in those days, as in these days, there were a great many more failures than successes. The prayer that did the work was the one in which the will of God and the will of the individual ego were one and the same. The "Father and I are one" prayer always brought results. It did then; it does now, and always will. The sublimest experiences in every age have been those where men have realized their birthright of divinity. We find records of these experiences scattered all along the way from Genesis to Revelation, and we find such examples in our daily intercourse with our friends. These states, however, are exceptional. We do not dwell in the secret

place of the Most High—the highest and grandest thought of ourselves. We do not “abide.” No more did the prophets and apostles, and this is why they were supremely happy at one time and ignorantly miserable at another. They believed in the God in themselves one day, and a God in the sky another day, and were like houses divided against themselves. They could not stand. And so they sickened, grew old and foolish, and died.

This is exactly what is the matter with us; but there is a way out of all these negative conditions, and the path shall be made plain.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE FIRST STEPS.

WE find that the chief cause of old age is ignorance of our divine inheritance. This truth should be ever present in the minds of our readers, because it is the basic truth of life, and is the firm foundation of everything that will come afterward.

Now for the prevention of old age.

How is it to be accomplished?

By scientific and consequently common-sense methods.

The people who by reason of the title are attracted to this book will be those who have commenced to be anxious about their personal appearance, who seem to be expressing the premonitory symptoms of decay, and those who are well started on their reluctant trip down-hill. All ages will be represented in this audience.

“Personal appearance?”

How much is contained in these two words. To me this phrase holds the most sacred of all thoughts; and yet the average woman, even in these days of awakening, is afraid and ashamed to admit that it means anything to her. She may have her little complexion aids, which are perfectly legitimate whether she realizes it or not; but she will keep them locked away from all observers, in the hope that her use of them will never be detected.

Why does she do this?

Because of the protest of the spirit of God within her, against the necessity of employing other than natural means in the preservation of her beauty. Deep down in her soul the spirit is ever whispering and suggesting. These suggestions she mistakes for vanity.

Why does she?

For no other reason than that the whole human race has been educated in this belief of vanity until it seems to have become incorporated into their very blood and bones.

St. Paul—bless his dear heart! he didn’t know everything—is more responsible per-

haps than any other person for imbuing the feminine mind with this false and pernicious idea. Paul never quite recovered from Saul. That was the trouble with him. But did he not do wonders in the short time between his conversion and his death? And if he had known that he had a right to life right here on this planet, what might he not have accomplished on the beautiful and æsthetic side of existence? In most things he "knew whereof he spoke," but in regard to women he was an out-and-out ignoramus.

Ministers of all denominations have followed St. Paul's lead in their fulminations against what they have been pleased to call the vanity of woman. But she hasn't "kept silence in the churches," and she hasn't as a rule "obeyed her husband," and she has curled her hair and rigged herself out in what the apostle described as "gaudy apparel." Her justice and artistic sense have proved quite superior to masculine prejudice and narrow creeds, and we find that the very hardest thing to kill in woman is her love of beauty.

And why?

Because all beautiful things are of God.

A lady was admiring a lovely gown that had just been sent home, and her mother, an old-time Presbyterian, felt it necessary to reprimand her for her vanity.

“It brings the tears to my eyes,” she said, “to see you so wedded to the things of this world—you, an immortal soul, with all your Christian responsibilities.”

“It is just because I am an immortal soul that I enjoy these things,” the daughter replied. “Why, mother, there isn’t an article in this gown that is not made of God’s substance, and it is made with such divine taste that I shall feel more godly than usual when I wear it.”

Of course this was the most awful blasphemy possible to conceive of, and was by no means easily forgiven. But it was the truth, and one we should never lose sight of.

The word God is often on the lips of the people, but he is the most distant of all their acquaintance. He rules in a heaven beyond their ken, and the only means of approach to

him is by the entreaty of the prayer of faith. He is a monarch in a distant part of the universe called heaven, and his children are all poverty-stricken nobodies.

The very opposite of this is true. There is no place where God is not. He is our life, our breath, our hearts, our brains. He is every atom and every molecule of us, and there is not a single article that we see, wear, or handle that is not made of the substance of God. And all this substance is ours to enjoy. When we are ashamed of our love of the beautiful, we are ashamed of God.

“Is there no vanity then in the world?” some one will ask.

Much less than people have generally supposed. When a woman puts all her thoughts upon the fit of a gown, the lustre of her jewels, and the furnishing of her establishment, she is not only vain but selfish. This is very different from the appreciation of beauty for beauty’s sake, or God’s sake.

So we start on our little tour together with the understanding that man is the greatest thing in the universe, made in the image and

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likeness of God, with all of God's privileges. This being the case we have a right to beauty, health, strength, power, riches, and eternal life. All these possessions are actually ours, and the only reason that we are not in full enjoyment of them is because we have not taken them. We have been too ignorant to claim our birthright.

A woman is seldom actively aroused to a sense of her danger until she commences to part with her good looks. Then her misery is acute. She has seen her relatives and friends grow old, and because of precedent and education she has been sure that some time this horrible change must come to her; but not yet. Oh! not yet. She is too full of life. She feels as young as she ever did—you will hear this remark made at ninety, if intelligence has been sufficiently in operation to protect the intellect—and now what can she do? What means can be employed to arrest the appearance of this creeping decay? It has got to be—that she knows—but how can she cover up the trail of the serpent? The rouge pot and the powder puff come in here

with the woman who has not been educated against the use of such things, but there is small comfort to be found in these superficial dabs and dustings. She sees through them and is quite sure that everybody else does. But anything is better than this strange and awful grandmotherly expression that confronts her every time she looks in the mirror. So she flies from one external medicament to another, and hunts about for tonics and remedies which will produce plumpness, or which will reduce the flesh which is beginning to be so troublesome to carry, and so ugly to behold.

This picture is not in the least exaggerated. Very few women have reached the age of thirty-five without passing through these crucial experiences.

Some persons who have been brought up in a cast-iron creed, and who consider it almost if not quite the unpardonable sin to endeavor by any means to enhance one's beauty, often smile sardonically and comment most unkindly upon such covering-up efforts on the part of their troubled sisters. But you may find these critics very particular and uncompromising

about the shape of a hat, the fit of a glove, or the trimming of a gown. What they call "vanity" shows itself in a different form, but it is not vanity any more than the endeavor to plump one's cheeks or improve one's complexion is vanity. It is the protest of the God within themselves against ugliness and decay.

It is absolutely necessary to understand that the desire for the retention of good looks, for the expression of beauty, is a thoroughly legitimate one. It is God-like, God-born, and has no other origin.

The partial realization of this is the first step toward either the prevention or the cure of old age.

I say "partial" because it is a very exceptional thing when this thought is grasped at its first presentation. It has to be taken hold of intellectually and so held in mind by day and by night that after a while it becomes a part of one. It becomes incorporated into the very marrow of the bones. Intellectual knowledge grows into intelligent assimilation, and the day comes sooner or later when one to a

saving extent comprehends his or her position in the universe.

Do not misunderstand here. There are those who attain to this realization in a flash, "the twinkling of an eye," but it is not usual. It may be that such instantaneous revelation may come to you, to you, or to you. If so, half the battle is won. The first step is the long step, and if it can be taken with "the seven-leagued boots" of a quick intelligence, so much the better.

But do not be discouraged if this consciousness of your right to be free and happy comes slowly. It surely will come if you are attentive and conscientious, and if you listen to the inner voice which is the voice of God.

"We hear a great deal about the new thought, and the necessity of thinking right thoughts," an earnest student writes, "and if you will only tell me what to think and how to think it, I shall be the most grateful creature upon earth. There seems to be a deep and oiled groove in me through which ten thousand thoughts a minute slip along —some good ones and some bad ones, but

they certainly appear to be beyond my control."

This is the common experience, and the result is discouraging. It is a sort of mental chaos, but it is impossible for more than one thought to occupy the mind at the same moment, to say nothing of ten thousand. It is either a kind thought or an unkind thought, a pure or an impure thought, a valuable or a no-account thought.

The error thought must be banished, and the only way on earth to do this is to put a good thought in its place. The student must learn to do this immediately, and here is the pivot upon which everything turns.

Every thought of sickness, sorrow, old age, poverty, or death is an error thought. Every envious, jealous, or suspicious thought is an error thought, and to harbor them is to live in a deadly and dying condition. These are the things that produce the burdens and penalties that weigh us down to the earth with sorrow and suffering. We sow and we reap. When we stop scattering error seeds and substitute good seed we shall reap

the joys of the kingdom of God, and not till then.

Suppose one wakes in the morning with a feeling of depression, or what are supposed to be the premonitory symptoms of illness. The first thought with those who have not studied on these lines will be: "Oh, dear! I'm just as blue as I can be," or, "Another cold is coming on, and I have only just got over the last one."

The wise and faithful student will, instead of these negative statements, declare:

"Nothing can induce me to listen to this nonsense. I am in the best of spirits. I am well and strong and happy. I am full of divine vigor. I refuse utterly to hear or to be dominated by a single negative suggestion. I am the child of freedom, and the God in myself makes it possible for me to declare my dominion over all things."

It is utterly out of the question for one to make these strong and true affirmations without realizing the power of the spirit. This power is absolute, and our trust in it will lead us "beside the still waters" and keep us in a

state of harmony inconceivable to those who live simply upon the surface of life.

“Keep us?”

Yes, if we keep it. The spirit of truth never pushes, never intrudes, but stands ready to honor every demand made upon it.

We are finding out in these days that there is something for us to do, and a very intelligent minority of the human family has discovered that this work must be done *now*. There can be no more postponing, no more dawdling. Neither philosophy nor religion has saved the world from suffering. Science must.

The substitution of a pleasant for an unpleasant thought is scientific. To banish a tear and put a smile in its place is scientific. To think well of a person of whom one has been thinking evil is scientific. To steadfastly refuse to be associated with inharmony of any description is scientific.

Why are these things scientific?

Because the person is working with the creative principle which always builds up and never tears down. One fit of temper, one

quarrel will destroy more tissue than can be made up in a week. Material science, now the beautiful helpmeet and corroborator of mental science, has proven to the satisfaction of the most critical intellects that anger and fear and worry poison the blood, and each emotion makes use of its own special means in promoting decay.

So we find we cannot worry and keep young. We cannot hate our neighbor without having a picture of that hatred appear on our faces.

Think of that!

Add to this the fact that when we keep on hating we are lavishly sowing the seeds of death.

This is true of all the other error emotions, and is it any wonder that there are so many cemeteries and so many old and dying people?

## CHAPTER III.

### EGO.

“He who fights and runs away,  
Will live to fight another day.”

THIS is an old and a very homely couplet, but it holds a great and pregnant truth. Somewhere, some time, the fight has got to be fought out, and it is my opinion, from an extended observation and considerable experience, that the longer it is delayed the harder it is.

This chapter commences with the biggest thing in the universe—the immortal, the omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient *ego*—the *I*.

The *I* is the only power that ever delivered us from bondage of any sort, and is the only force that will ever keep us out of the clutches of old age. The God in the sky hasn’t done it. Our friends haven’t helped in any direction, for they are all dying with us. Not even

one little lift have we had from anybody in this matter,—and as we think it over, who has helped us out of the most of our scrapes? Those who loved us have in many cases honestly tried to bring us peace and happiness, but as they were out at the elbows in such ways themselves, their service has chiefly consisted in proving that we were no worse off than themselves. A kindred misery never helped to alleviate a single sorrow. And we have all been very close relatives in unhappiness.

Who has helped us? We recall many a crucial experience from which we have emerged, if not triumphantly, at least with some credit to ourselves. It seems as if we must have had outside aid. "The doctor did this," we tell ourselves, and "this friend loaned a little money to tide over a rough spot. We couldn't have pulled through without that money."

Perhaps not, but what made it possible for you to receive this loan or gift?

Did you ever think of that?

Perhaps the friend arrived at the opportune moment and offered the financial help. Was

it so in your case? If so, yours is an exceptional one. You know that such things seldom occur, and when they do we are apt in our ignorance to cry "Miracle! miracle!" But this proves the almighty power of the I better than any other example that could be given. If this has happened to you it is proof positive that for some reason you are ahead of your kind. It shows that the power of attraction, the creative power, is far stronger with you than with others. By means of this force of which you were entirely unaware, you drew this friend to your side to supply the demand you had unconsciously sent out into the universe. He or she caught the vibration and you were relieved from your necessity. But you did it yourself. The I of you was the agent, actor, and doer. In this calculation the money was little more than a secondary consideration, although it meant so much to you.

In most instances where assistance of any kind is necessary, one is compelled to ask for it by letter or by personal interview. Is this not your work? When you constructed the communication which you hoped would postpone

the foreclosure of that mortgage or would lift it entirely, did you not use every argument that your ingenuity could suggest to touch the vibrating note in the one to whom you appealed? In other words, you put yourself in it, the fervent, beautiful, glorious I. And you were lifted out of this slough of despond by the God within yourself.

Somebody will say right here: "But what of the answers to such distressing calls that are not favorable? I have written such letters and they brought me nothing. I was either ignored or insulted."

Such failure may be due to poor judgment, lack of tact, which shows the absence of the attracting power more plainly perhaps than anything else, or a lack of faith. Either one of these will defeat the most praiseworthy object in the world. Good judgment selects the right man or right woman to whom to say the right word. Tact says it, and faith gets it.

We have all of us heard more or less talk ever since we can remember about magnetism. We have noticed that some persons draw us and some repel us. We like to be in this

man's society, and we cannot bear to be in the same room with that one. Good judgment would assure us of the foolishness of asking a favor of a person who inspired such a feeling. We are not magnetically related to each other, and this is no discredit to either of us. But it is a waste of time and energy to endeavor to vibrate in their atmosphere. All these things are quickly discerned by the wise ones, but wisdom is rare, and so we go on making mistakes. In other words, we strive to take, and take amiss. This is all a part of our education, if we will have it so. It is called by some the school of discipline and God's way of dealing with his children. The fact is, it is simply our ignorant way of doing things. Of the true God we know nothing, and so we bump our heads and stub our toes against everything that seems to be in our way, and when there is no obstacle or impediment in sight, we are sure to scare up some hobgoblin that is worse than anything we have had before.

That people do learn by these bumps and tumbles is undoubtedly true—some people—

the majority, perhaps. But there are many others—we see them every day and sometimes wonder what excuse there could have been for their birth and continued existence—who never appear to learn anything. They simply encumber the earth and make trouble for everybody who comes into their atmosphere.

What of these?

They are densely ignorant, spiritually blind, deaf and dumb. Their brothers and sisters who slip and slide and fall and pick themselves up again have some knowledge of their divine origin, though this knowledge may be an unconscious possession. They do not make intelligent use of it because they do not know that it is theirs, but it often moves them to good and even great issues. These are they who learn on *this* plane by their mistakes.

We find that unconscious intelligence is preferable to no intelligence.

The man who fights and runs away, or sits weakly down and deplores his hard luck, will certainly live to fight another day, but his occasional attempts at overcoming will surely stand him in good stead. The other fellow

has got to learn also. Whatever the seeming, man is potentially perfect, and potentiality must become reality sooner or later. We may delay this process indefinitely. There is time enough even for the slowest intelligence.

This thought cannot fail to comfort those whose lives have been greatly disquieted by contact with these mistaken souls. God did not create such sinners, so-called, for the especial development and spiritual salvation of their relatives. This is a tremendous fallacy, but one that has obtained through all the ages. It is clear gain, however, if one realizes development by such means. God is certainly in it, but not at all in the way that has been so ignorantly believed. The God in the person, the supreme omnipotent *I*, has in such instances risen to the occasion, and for the time being at least dominated the adversary.

This is the God that does the work at all times.

The demand now is for conscious growth, real God growth, and this demand is a perfectly possible and legitimate one. It is making itself powerfully felt all over the earth,

and the supply is meeting it just as supply always does meet the intelligent determination to have.

### THE EGO? THE I?

What must be done to bring the I into the working consciousness of the individual?

It has lain dormant, been ignored and misunderstood long enough. Ignorance concerning it has been the cause of all the sorrow and suffering that have ever come to man.

When we wish to become acquainted with a language, an art, a science, what do we do? We study it, we devote our time and attention to it. We concentrate upon it, and day by day we become more and more familiar with our subject, and after a while proficiency crowns our efforts and we look upon our work and say it is good. If it is good we know it is good, although still loath to make such admission save to ourselves in the privacy of our own apartments. We have called this natural modesty and a proper delicacy, when it has been no such thing. On the same principle

we have spoken slightly of our poem, our pie, our lecture, our gown, our housekeeping, all the time knowing in our inmost hearts that these things were hard to beat.

In this manner the *I* has been entirely ignored, and the strangest part of it is that it has usually been done in the name of God, the mighty creative *Ego*. The race has been taught that boasting and vanity were displeasing to God, and that a proper appreciation of one's work was an offence to him. To praise another's efforts was, on the contrary, pleasing to Deity.

This is the result of a false education and an ignorant precedent, and now at the close of this wonderful cycle some of us begin to realize that a proper education must usurp the fallacious one which has wrought so much misery and strewn this lovely green earth with so many wrecks.

One time at a woman's club meeting a very sweet little lady was unexpectedly called upon to make a few remarks. It was plain to see that this was a new and a very embarrassing position; but she rose, and, after a moment's

pause, began in this way: "Mrs. President and Ladies: You have done a very foolish thing to invite me to this platform to-day. I never made a speech in my life, because I was perfectly aware that I did not know how to make a speech; but, ladies, I can make the best apple pie that was ever put into human mouth, and if you will do me the honor to come to my home in New Jersey, I will prove my statement beyond a doubt."

This was the oration of the afternoon. And why? Because of the affirmation of the *I*. Here was a woman who knew of one thing that she could do and do well, and was not ashamed to say so. It was a new thing, and all wholesome novelties are delightful. Then this visitor possessed wisdom. She knew better than to talk about the subjects which were on the programme, because she had had no training, though after this bright little speech there wasn't a member of the club who did not believe that she could have spoken to the point on any conceivable topic. When the glorious *Ego* is strong enough to make itself felt by others, even in so small a matter as making

a pie, its influence for general upliftment is remarkable.

It is a fine accomplishment to know how to make a good pie, a good loaf of bread, a good soup,—in fact, a good anything to eat, drink, or to wear, but the realization of ability in these directions is really what makes the good bread and the artistic gown. The *I* is master of the situation.

Then the declaration of our little club visitor was a happy change from the usual conventional methods. The person who is brilliantly unconventional is unique.

Now suppose this woman could have stepped to a still higher height and in a few words had said something that her audience could carry home with them and remember, about the all-mighty-ness of this God-principle incarnated in every son and daughter of the Most High. Suppose she had said: "I do not choose to speak upon the educational topics that appear on your programme, but I would like to give you, if there was time, my idea of true fundamental education. Your speakers have acquitted themselves with credit, but to my mind

they have not once touched the heart of the matter. They have ignored the real girl and the real boy, the real man and the real woman, and placed them in the light of puppets to be pulled and acted upon by some outside influence. This conception of education has endured for ages, but all the same it is most false and pernicious. Education is unfoldment, and that which is good for anything comes from within instead of without. The very first thing to teach a child is the lesson of his own God-force, the power of his own *Ego* to learn anything, do anything, overcome anything that stands in the way of his advancement. He needs to be taught that he has in his own little self every quality and faculty that God possesses, and that nothing is impossible to him."

Such a talk, thanks be to the spirit of progress, the evolution of the *Ego* in many a soul, would be received with gratitude and fullest appreciation by many members of our women's clubs. But even those who appeared shocked by these hard statements would be benefited. The writer has observed such ef-

fects too often to be in the least doubt of their value.

“How do I know that the *I* you talk about is good enough to be cultivated or relied upon?” some timid, creed-bound friend will inquire.

Because the *I* is the almighty part of you—the God of you, and God is good.

“But do not many persons mistake their will for God’s will?” another may ask.

No intelligently conscientious person can ever so mistake. The only thing to know is the righteousness of your cause. “Find out you’re right, then go ahead.”

Go ahead and stop for nothing. It is the doubt, the fear that has kept this omnipotent *I* from the true expression of itself. These twin spectres can only be put out of our lives by the realization of the rights and the power of the *I*.

## CHAPTER IV.

### I CAN BECAUSE I AM.

THIS is a favorite affirmation of mine and no stronger one can be found.

What is an affirmation?

If called to the witness-stand we can either kiss the Bible and swear to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, or we can hold up our right hand and affirm. So when we make an affirmation we declare what we believe to be the truth.

We are all continually upon the witness-stand. We are witnessing for ourselves and consequently for God, though we are not aware of it. We never can lie to ourselves, however much we may lie to others, because God is in us, and God cannot be deceived.

*I can because I am.*

I can what?

I can be master of myself and my sur-

Ames, West M.E.

738  
51

Kirk, Eleanor.

The Prevention and Cure of old Age.

Eleanor Kirk, Brooklyn, N.Y.

1899

author - vegetal  
and floral



roundings. . I can be well, strong, happy, and free.

“But how can I be free when I have never seen a well and happy day in my life?”

By the steadfast endeavor to realize the I, the real, the God of yourself.

Do you know what is meant by “steadfast”?

It is to hold on steadily, and this the majority of persons are too lazy or too faithless to do. They may become enthused by something they have read, or some treatment they have had, sufficiently to start on the work of overcoming negative conditions. But it is a more difficult job than they anticipated, and so they often grow discouraged. After a while they relax their efforts and fall back into apparently old conditions.

“Why, I made my affirmation for a whole week just as I was told, and my headaches were not a bit better,” a very distressed and weary-looking woman told a circle of friends. “I’ve simply had to go back to bromides. They do relieve temporarily, and I must have a little rest. I know that bromides are destructive, but I had rather die than live in this

way. I had tried everything else, you see, before I went into science."

"Went into science?"

It is impossible not to be amused with such speeches, even though they do disclose such depths of ignorance.

Affirmations are merely steps to the accomplishment of a purpose. They are what the alphabet is to a language, the multiplication table to mathematics. One may say five times seven are thirty-five, and five times eight are forty till his tongue is paralyzed, and if he does not put these figures and all the figures into practical demonstration he will never know anything about the science of numbers. So one may say, I am well, I am rich, I am free, and if he does not know what these statements mean, and how to use his common sense and intellectual ability in putting the affirmations into practice, he might as well be a parrot for all the good the words will do him. And here is where a great many serious mistakes are made. This loose talk about "science" is enough to disgust any man who has ever used his brains to any purpose. The law is all

right, but we must co-operate with the law in order to make it of any use. Here is the law of the locomotive, for instance. This intricate and powerful machine, invented and brought to its present perfection by the spirit of God made manifest in his highest creation—man—draws a train of cars across the continent. Here is a law in full and beautiful operation. Suppose now you want to go to Denver. What do you do? You make your preparations, write to your friends to expect you at a certain time, pack your trunk, buy your ticket, go to the depot, and get aboard the train. In this way you have co-operated with the law of the locomotive, which is simply universal force brought into special use for the comfort, benefit, and prosperity of the individual and the nation.

Now, you desired with all your heart to make this trip, or you thought it of sufficient importance to warrant a good deal of work and expense. The locomotive takes you to your destination, and there you are, wearied or rested, happy or unhappy, according as you personally have co-operated with the God with-

in yourself. If you have fussed and fumed, and fanned and complained, if you have usurped the engineer's prerogative and tried to make better time from one station to another all the way from New York to Denver, you were probably something of a wreck when you got there; but if you realized that the very same force that ran that machine was running you and that you could depend upon it, there isn't the least doubt but what you were a credit to yourself and a joy to your friends when you swung into the great Denver depot.

Suppose, instead of this intelligent working with the law, you should make no preparations for the journey you desired to make, and should sit still in your home and say: "I can go to Denver. I am on my way to Denver. I shall arrive in Denver next Saturday morning. I am free to go where I please, and I please to go to Denver. I am God's child, and because this is so I have a pass to any point in the universe. I am on my way to Denver. I am on my way to Denver"—would you expect to get there?

I do not think you would, and yet this expectation would not be a bit more ridiculous than the claims which are constantly made by alleged scientists. These claims are all misleading. You cannot sit in your rocking-chair and get anywhere, though you piled up affirmations and concentrated all your mental energies upon the trip. You would hitch along a little in the old way—this is the law of rocking-chairs—and the result would be a more defined rounding of the shoulders and a shrivelling of brain-cells.

Try and remember that the only value of an affirmation is to familiarize the mind with a new truth. To the boy just taking up the study of arithmetic the science of mathematics is a sealed book. He is obliged to open this volume little by little. So he studies addition, multiplication, and division, until he sees his way into new combinations. After a while he is not compelled to recall that nine times nine are eighty-one. He knows it, and that part of his mathematical education is finished. He can run up a great column of figures in a jiffy, and if he makes a mistake he knows that it is

his own blunder, and that there is nothing amiss with the law.

There is very little difference between the student of mathematics and the student of mind. The thought of being able to govern ourselves instead of being governed by fate or circumstance is a truth which has only recently been recognized. Centuries of error have made it a hard matter to comprehend. Like the science of numbers it must be commenced at the very beginning and in the simplest manner possible.

When we make the glorious statement—*“I can because I am,”* it is imperative that we do our level best to understand what these words mean. Without this understanding the phrase is of no earthly use.

I can be free and happy and strong because I am. Am what? Am the expression, the temple of the living God—the expression of creative energy. This makes me the true “I am,” and all that I have to do is to recognize this truth and express this energy. There can be no realization of the “I am” until one begins to create, just as grammar can be of

no use to a student until he begins to make sentences and write letters and compositions. Then he creates something, and so puts into practice the rules which seemed so hard when he was memorizing them. Let us take a case in point. I, for instance, was at the head of my class in grammar, though, with the exception of mathematics, I thought it the dryest stuff that the mind of man had ever conceived of. I was at the foot of the class in mathematics, and as I look back I think I was somewhat proud of the position. I was ashamed of myself about the grammar, however, for I realized that I was a thorough fake. My teacher was deceived in me because of a quick and retentive memory. I could remember pages of anything no matter how dry or abstruse. But I did not know how intellectually to apply the rules to composition, and yet, strange to say, the preparation of an essay was a perfect joy to me. I instinctively used these rules without perceiving how I did it, and it was not until in later years when I commenced to earn my living by the pen that the meaning and application of these rules dawned upon me. When

this time came I was amazed, and I could not help wondering if the failure to make these connections in the past was the fault of my teacher or my own. It seems to me that I could have known as well then as afterward, but perhaps not.

To take a large view of the subject, was it important that I should know these rules when I could talk to the point and write to the point without them? It appears sometimes as if this especial creative faculty was born whole, so to speak, and needed no primary instruction. It came full-fledged, all ready to do its work.

This is no uncommon experience, as most of us know. There are born mathematicians, mechanics, and musicians, who every day demonstrate the completeness of the creative principle.

We see, more infrequently, it is true, excellent mental scientists who never needed a constructed affirmation in their progressive work. They are themselves the affirmations. They intuitively know that the God-right to govern is vested in themselves. They did

not have to be told. It was not necessary for them to say, "I am free," "I am well." These were self-evident propositions.

This is the way it will be in everything one of these days. We shall not need the slow processes of learning in any department of art, literature, or science. We shall know because we know that we have a right to know. Until then we must learn the primary rules of anything in which we wish to become proficient.

There is no way of getting a truth firmly fixed in the mind outside of these psychic or intuitive methods which we have been considering, except by beginning with the alphabet, and according to our attention will be our progress.

Every conscientious student of the science of being has times of illumination which clear away the fog and reveal the onward and upward path. He is not obliged then to grope his way by short and careful steps. He walks bravely and triumphantly along, feeling confident that, whatever the obstacles, he can never be left entirely in the dark.

The progress of the individual is determined

by the amount of his creative force. The first thing to know is that we possess this creative energy, and the next thing is to bring it into intelligent exercise. In order to grasp this knowledge, affirmations of power are absolutely necessary. An approximate realization of such possession is usually a sufficient stimulus to endeavor. It is impossible to be careless or lazy when the song of dominion is singing in one's soul; when the divine in one's self is constantly declaring that health and happiness and immortality in the flesh are truths if one is only willing to work them out.

Not long ago a friend, whom I always called "the woman with a willing mind," so desirous was she of knowing and doing, started in with all her might on this work of reconstruction. Her life had been a hard and bitter one, but there was not an atom of bitterness in her nature that I could ever discern. And I really tried to do so, although such effort was quite opposed to the usual scientific method of looking only for the good. In one of our conversations she said:

"I have always felt that there was some-

thing wrong in myself, or all these horrible things could not intrude upon my life. But what? As far as the Ten Commandments were concerned I was absolutely perfect. I was kindly disposed to my fellow-creatures and always ready to do a kindness. I never quarrelled, and was very slow to anger."

"But these were all negative virtues," I ventured to remark.

"Yes, I have thought of that, but as long as I was willing to do all I could for peace and harmony what more was to be expected from me? I could not make the persons in my environment behave themselves. I tried that for years, and it didn't work. The more I expostulated and reasoned and coaxed, the more friction I found to contend with. Under all these circumstances, why should I constantly blame myself for what was continually happening?"

Then I told her that this accusation was the God in herself protesting against the sacrifice of her individuality; that this divine force, this creative principle was ever on the watch to assure her that self-preservation was really

the first law of nature; that we could do nothing worth doing for others until we lifted ourselves out of negative conditions.

"But," said she, "you do not mean that we must stop caring and doing for others? That would be impossible."

"It is just as Jesus Christ said: 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.' As long as we are down in the valley with our brothers and sisters we are of no use to them. The sentiment that possess current for helpful love is maudlin stuff. Did it ever do you any good to sit down and weep with a friend, or have that friend weep with you? Did you ever feel any better or stronger for listening to a detailed account of an illness or a death or a sorrow? Did you ever receive any lasting help from pouring your woes into another's ear? Do you think he or she was lifted and inspired by your doleful story? No, you were all in the ditch together. When we reach an eminence where it is possible for us to hold out our hands and say, "Come up higher, brother. Jump up and try it again, sister," with smiles on our faces and happiness in our

hearts, because we know that by one process or another every child of God must somehow or somewhere save himself, then we can do some good. When we are really 'lifted up' we realize that all is well with everybody, notwithstanding the seeming, and it is utterly impossible for us any longer to worry about them, or be hurt by them. They are potential conquerors and have the same privilege of Sonship and Daughtership that we have. Then our letting go of them is the very best thing that could happen. There is nothing more aggravating to a person who is working out his problem, whether in the science of mathematics or the science of Being, than to be continually nagged, questioned, and advised. His rights are being intruded upon, and he resents it, and that makes inharmony rampant and is the cause of more sickness and sorrow to the interferer than to the one who is interfered with."

"I begin to see it," said the woman with the willing mind. "I have been sentimental instead of wisely loving. I will strive for the eminence you spoke of."

And she did strive. For weeks there was no report. I minded my own business—though I confess it was hard—and asked no questions. Finally, one morning we met at a shopping counter. I knew that she had climbed the heights as soon as I saw her face.

“Well?” said I.

“All *is* well,” she replied, “and oh! it came so suddenly. There had been an unusual conflict in the family, and I started to make my affirmations of peace. But to my wonder and surprise I found I did not need them. Peace was really mine right in the midst of this raging tempest. It had no more effect upon me than distant thunder, and I have a perfect realization that I never again can be affected by such conditions.”

This was the result of willingness to learn, and a steadfast holding to the lessons. Her affirmations were at first merely intellectual helps, the same as the multiplication table to a child, but they opened the door for her into countless realms of beauty and harmony.

“Go thou, and do likewise.”

“I can because I am.”

## CHAPTER V.

### RESPECT FOR THE OLD.

“WHY do people generally lose respect for the old?”

For no other reason in the world than that the old generally lose respect for themselves.

This answer will probably be strongly combated by the asker of this question, who shows by her communication a very strong belief in the necessity of old age and other negative and equally unpleasant conditions. But let us see if the statement is not true.

The thought of the ages has so crystallized into a belief in the inevitableness and helplessness of old age, that at a certain time in life every human being considers it an imperative duty to begin to travel down hill. They say that the hand of the Lord is upon them, but they reckon without their host, for the Lord has nothing whatever to do with it. The One whom we call Lord is the Lord of

life and not of death, the Lord of strength and not of weakness. The All-Good could never have decreed anything so horrible as disease and decay. Ten years ago even, such a sentence as the above would have been challenged and seriously criticised, but to-day, thank God, orthodox ministers are preaching this doctrine in their pulpits, and eminent but once narrow philosophers are putting such thoughts into books.

Growing old is a habit and a very bad one. Growing old is a letting go, a relaxing of energy.

“I am so many years old. I do not see as well as I once did. None of my faculties are as acute as they once were. I am getting feeble. I am growing old.”

This is what we hear on all sides; what we always have heard, and what we shall continue to hear until there is a more universal waking up in this matter. A good many are waking up, however, and these questioners and thinkers will carry the glad tidings to others, who in their turn will prove evangelists.

As many of our readers are already im-  
pa-

tient to know what is meant by the statement that the old are not respected because they do not respect themselves, we will consider that point now, and go on with the argument later.

The letters that come to this office from those who call themselves old are all of one character. They are full of complaints of their children, relatives, and friends. They are not treated well, not respected. Many of them have broken up their homes and gone to live with their children, in many cases having invested the bulk of their money in the son's or the son-in-law's business. If any of them have ever realized on these sums, the good news has not reached this department.

There are honest sons and honest sons-in-law, but there seems no reason, now that mother has got along in years, why she should not put her money into the business and take it out in board.

Then there are the mothers and fathers who are taken in out of charity, and who feel themselves a burden every moment of their miserable lives. There are all sorts and conditions, but every one of the number parted with his

or her self-respect before entering upon this bondage.

Here is a woman who gave up a fine home and a small but adequate income for the privilege (?) of living with her daughter. Now, through some mismanagement and more selfishness on the part of the daughter, mother is obliged to ask for car-fare and money for postage-stamps, and is considered very cruel if she is not willing at all times, by night or by day, to act as nurse for the grandchildren. This woman has sacrificed every right. Do you think she respects herself? Not much. Had she kept her house and lived on her income, she would have been independent and consequently self-respecting. This she would have done had she known herself for what she was—a free-born citizen of God's universe. The head of a family should never carelessly pass the reins of government to another. There are children and children; some that can be trusted and others that can not. The son or daughter who has been selfish or sly in their dealings before marriage will be tricky and selfish afterward. Marriage, like death,

produces no great change. The average son has no misgivings about leaving his mother and starting out for himself in life. He marries and goes away. So does the daughter. This is all as it should be. The birds forsake the parent nest, but is it very poor policy for the mother bird to fly with them, at least to the extent of deserting her own home. Sometimes, of course, here seems no other way, but such changes should be made with the greatest caution. Right here is one of the places where individualism is so necessary. The home may seem a different spot after the children have left it, but the home made by the father and mother is not alone for the rearing and the education of children. It is for *themselves*. The greatest mistake that was ever made is in thinking that there is nothing more to do, to have, to enjoy after the children are "settled."

"If I can live to see my daughters happily married and settled," says the fond, foolish, ignorant mother, "I shall have nothing left to wish for."

There is nothing in the least right about such an attitude or statement, from the first

premise to the last. To commence with, the marriage of the daughters should not be, as it generally is, the first consideration. It should be the proper training and education of the girl, with a view to the evolution of individuality, that she may be able to hold her own anywhere, in marriage or out of it. The mothers who think that life holds nothing more for them after their children are disposed of, are sure to become burdens upon somebody. What little individuality they possessed has vanished with the children, and there is nothing left but a grumbling, tottering stepping toward the grave. Such persons are not desirable anywhere. The sons may want to borrow their money, and the daughters will put up with them if they are obliged to. Of course they "won't see mother without a home," but she is so hard to get along with, with her pains and fears and stories of the past. How can these mothers inspire respect when they have not enough respect for themselves to keep them cheerful, hopeful, active, and perfectly independent? There can be no happiness in life without independence, and

one's own home is the best place to foster and cultivate this most desirable quality.

The satisfaction of having wisely directed one's children should add many years to one's life instead of taking from them. There is very little time during the period of child-bearing and child-rearing for the broad study and enjoyment to which every daughter of God is entitled. After the toil and heat of the day come the natural rest and refreshment. This is the opportunity for the attainment of a higher culture which some day some men and women will know how to enjoy. There is no time for comfort and peace and joy when people are spending all their energies in getting ready to die. Is it not possible to make the writers of these old-age and death letters to this office understand that they not only do all their own dying, but their own decreeing as well? There is no far-away God sitting on a throne in a far-away heaven, who decrees that you shall fail in health, fail in pocket, grow old, and in other ways make fools of yourselves. It is all according to your own desire, intelligence, and determination. If,

with the love of God in your heart, you plant yourselves firmly on your two feet, resolved to stand, there is nothing in the universe that can overthrow you, because there is nothing in the universe superior to man. He is the biggest thing in it, and when he says a thing and means it, it is bound to go. Man—this word is of course used generically and means woman as well as man—is made in the image and likeness of God, and is the only medium through which God can express himself. Whether this medium is strong or weak, well or ill, happy or unhappy, rests in the individual. It is a question of his intelligence and fidelity. The better and stronger the medium of expression, the stronger and better the message.

Some of you will ask: “But what are these feeble old people to do in order to bring about a better state of things? They are old, they are sick, they are dependent, they are very unhappy, and their children do not respect them. Granted that they brought these conditions upon themselves, what can they do now?”

All of them could do something if they

would. Some of them will when the truth is clearly presented to them. This habit of growing old and dying is a very hard one to overcome. It is in the very blood and bones.

Steps can be retraced, dropped stitches taken up, but it is not easy work. Old houses can be renovated and put in beautiful order if will and intelligence stand at the helm. But it must be an up-and-a-doing sort of business, and each one must be a faithful warder at his or her own gate. Thoughts of feebleness, illness, old age, and death must be met and vanquished at once, and in their stead must be placed high and brave thoughts of dominion over all things.

One friend who has been carefully practising on these lines writes that she hasn't celebrated a birthday for three years, and is determined not to count the time off as was once her foolish habit.

"My children and grandchildren do not know what to make of me," she adds. "I have no occasion now to ask aid in buttoning my boots or tying my veil. I go out and return when I please, and I trouble no one to

come after me; indeed, I will not permit it under any circumstances. This used to be a standing cause of complaint: 'Oh, dear! I've got to go after grandmother.' I could talk to you a week and then not tell you *all* the good things that I have substituted for bad and weak ones. I am rarely ever ill now, and five years ago illness was my normal condition. Let me tell you that mother is treated with some respect now."

Certainly, and because she respects herself.

## CHAPTER VI.

### DON'T BE DISCOURAGED.

IN following the path laid out in previous chapters there may come moments when it will seem far easier to lie down by the wayside and die than to keep up the march. This is the case with the majority of persons who have spent their lives in thinking wrong thoughts and doing foolish deeds. Error-thinking has become habitual, and the work of casting out error and substituting truth will sometimes be wearisome. But there is one supreme satisfaction in this quest, tired and disheartened though we may occasionally be—we can never turn back. We may go slowly, and we may sit down and wait a whilc, but it is an utter impossibilty to retrace our steps. We may look back, and perchance cry out for the things we have left, foolish and unsatisfactory though they were—such is the force of habit—but up to date I have not found a sin-

gle person who ever returned to the old starting-point.

And isn't this glorious testimony! One may falter for a moment and think he is about to faint or fall, but a little converse with the God in himself braces him up again, and off he starts more determined than ever. He may feel and declare that he seems to be making very little headway compared to what he expected when he took the road, but there is never any real desire for the old methods.

The tremendous statement has been made that no one likes to have the care of the old. This will be contradicted by a few sentimentalists, who will declare that they were never so happy in their lives as when they were anticipating the wants of mother or grandmother, or tagging along after dear old grandpa for fear that he would stumble and fall.

I do not believe that these are true statements, though I do not think that these persons mean to lie. They have schooled themselves to this work because some one must do it, but that they like the job is not conceivable. How can one fail constantly to compare mother

as she once was with mother as she is now? And how is it possible not to cry out in bitterness of spirit against such waste and disintegration?

A young man said to me with a vehemence which I never saw equalled:

“I would give every dollar I own in the world if I could stop my mother in this down-hill process which she seems to have adopted lately. She is the light of my eyes and the joy of my heart, and to see her ageing and failing day after day drives me nearly distracted.”

“What does she say about it?” I asked.

“Oh, she smiles serenely, and declares that I am both illogical and irreverent. God has created us all to grow old and die, and her time has come for the decrepitude of age. I told her this morning that I thought it would be a good plan to die and be done with it.”

“Then you would not like to walk along with her through these processes of decay?”

“No, and I don’t believe it would be possible for me to do so. I would a thousand times rather she would breathe her last breath this

minute than to see this awful work go on. Just think of it—once so dainty and bright, and now picking out sombre colors and wearing what she calls ‘old ladies’ bonnets.’ ”

“ You don’t agree with your mother in regard to the cause of old age and death? In other words, you do not consider them God-sent? ”

“ God forbid! ” was the godly response. “ I believe that the devil of ignorance is the only one to blame in this matter.”

These were advanced thoughts indeed for a young man scarcely twenty-four years old, but he spoke the honest truth out of a full, tender, and loving heart. He was not fettered by creed or habit. He did not care what any one might think or say, and that is the place we must all reach before we can be really free.

“ Is it possible that I have got to stand by and see my mother go trotting down-hill in this fashion? ” my companion asked at parting.

“ And, oh! those confounded old ladies’ bonnets! ” he added. “ It sometimes seems to me that if I could get her to take some interest

in her personal appearance, in the style and quality of her garments, half the battle would be won. But, no! Any old thing is good enough for an old woman, and I have at last reached the place where I hate to take her out, because I am ashamed of her. If she goes on at this rate in five years' time she will look more like an Egyptian mummy than anything else."

My advice to this loyal and sensible son was to talk these things right out, whatever the apparent consequences. He was right and his mother was wrong. Patience and determination might succeed in forcing a seed into her benighted mind which would take root and grow and blossom into a saving grace.

This young man had good and sufficient reasons for the faith that was in him, so this advice was safe. It might be safe in any instance, though it does seem as if the average spoken protest against old age served only to stir up discord.

"I come not to bring peace, but a sword," said Jesus Christ. And sometimes the sword of the spirit is more necessary than anything

else. We should certainly be very positive in our treatment of these negative conditions.

Does any one really think that there would be such a demand for old men's and old ladies' homes if the children of these decrepit and dying ones really liked to take care of them? That there are inmates of these institutions whose children would gladly care for them if they were able to do so, goes without saying, but that this work would be done more from a sense of duty than real desire, goes also without saying. The secrets are all disclosed when one is so unfortunate as to be obliged to listen to the stories of those who are supported by public charity.

"I was very disagreeable to my son-in-law," a sweet-faced, bright-eyed woman told me. "You see I had a long spell of rheumatism, and he thought it was more than my daughter was able to bear, and the first thing I knew I was obliged to come here. Of course I came with my own consent, but I could not stay and be a burden, you know."

And this foolish woman had heavily mortgaged a house and a store to pull her son-in-

law out of a financial hole. He couldn't pay the interest on the property, and the mortgages were foreclosed.

With this woman, as with thousands of others, there had been no intelligent preparation against old age—or, speaking after the manner of the world—for old age. Even without the spiritual quickening which discloses the truth that such decay is not necessary, it does seem as if we might have had a little better showing in these respects.

Now, I would not be in the least discouraged about our friends in the old ladies' and the old men's homes if it were not for the fact that these institutions are exclusively governed by the churches and considered as simple halting-places for the dying. Sometimes death seems long in coming to all concerned. The rooms and the beds are wanted for other occupants, those who are not so helpless, and in such an atmosphere how is it possible to speak the word that will be likely to start a healthy train of thought? Outside the cemetery there is nothing nearer death than these congregations of men and women "waiting for the call." It

is the saddest sight on earth, because it more vividly shows the effect of ignorance than anything else can do, not excepting prisons.

There is life and health and strength in prisons. The inmates have materialized error thoughts, that is all, and there is a fine chance for a man as long as he expects to be free some day.

I never saw a horse "turned out to die" without a keen sense of sorrow, but how much harder to bear is the sight of these multitudes of our dear brothers and sisters waiting for death to relieve them and all who have the care of them!

It is a hideous picture, and the less we contemplate it the better for our peace of mind and consequent usefulness. But these object-lessons are occasionally necessary. They teach us the importance of a steadfast protest against this crystallized thought of old age. They brace us up to speak the word continually.

We know now that no one wants to grow old, feeble, and helpless, that no one enjoys observing this process in others, and that the

care of the old is not a congenial occupation. The whole universe cries out against decay, and yet every human creature on top of the earth believed until very recently that God or nature had decreed old age and death. The large majority of the world's inhabitants are of this opinion now, but there are enough who are not to leaven the whole lump.

So let us not be discouraged, but let us work with all our might for the establishment of the truth, which is that we have as much right to life as the God who made us, and that the issues of life and death are within ourselves.

## CHAPTER VII.

### PREVENTION.

THIS work should be commenced in childhood, as soon as a boy or a girl is born into the world. Yea, verily, and before, months and years before there is any thought of giving birth to children. Many persons are now waking up to this necessity, and are doing their best to educate the young in the science of being.

I charge all those who read this volume to strive in every imaginable way for the establishment of schools which shall teach this science of mind along with the intellectual branches which must form the groundwork of a child's education. It is a shame to be any longer remiss in this matter. Why should we who are so keenly aware of our own mis-education stand passively by and permit our little ones to box the compass of errors which have made life a perpetual Tophet, and which

we are striving so hard to eliminate from our consciousness?

When we commence this work we find that there is something to do all along the line. We must meet and speak the word to every kind of negative thought. We have the so-called very old and those "past middle life," who are fretting their hearts out because of the loss of beauty and the expected approach of infirmities. We have the young man and the maiden, and last, but not least, the dear little children. There is a great work to be done for each and all of these. The work with the child is by far the easiest. Children are passive, receptive, natural, teachable. They have nothing to unlearn, and are utterly without prejudice.

We have found that nothing is impossible when the *Ego* has learned to recognize its own divinity. We have learned that this is the bed-rock upon which every material, moral, and spiritual structure must be reared. "Other foundation there is none." For thousands of years men have built upon the shifting sands. Most of them were half dead to start with—the majority unwished for and unwel-

come, ushered into families that had no use for them—by the lustful use of the great creative principle. Of course they were half dead when they were born. As if that were not enough, precedent decreed that the live half should immediately commence to die.

“If you do this you will be sick. If you eat that you will die. If you are not a good child you cannot go to heaven. Mamma will punish you and God will punish you.”

This is the kind of teaching that the young and plastic mind has had from time immemorial. Are we not strong enough even now to at least hamper and harass this death-dealing, old-age-breeding curriculum? I am sure that we are, if we all attend to our business by speaking the right word and administering the strong blow against the walls of creed and tradition whenever we have opportunity to do so; and surely there can be no lack of that.

The prevention of old age, so far as treatment in this small volume is concerned, must principally concern those persons who have reached a point where they begin to observe and acutely dread their own decadence. How

shall they prevent the further processes of decay?

First, as I have tried to make plain in previous chapters, by the recognition of the "I am" in themselves. As long as they depend upon an unapproachable God in the far-off realm of nowhere, they will sicken, grow old, and die. This lesson has been taught by centuries of suffering and heartbreak. We need not emphasize it except in the attempt to induce our readers to discard from their minds the cut-and-dried conclusion that because a certain order of things has always obtained it always must. We once studied our lessons by the light of a tallow candle. If the arc light had been predicted at that time it would have been considered blasphemous. "If God had intended a better light than the candle he would have given it to us," the wise in their own conceit would have argued. But we have the arc light now, and a thousand other almost inconceivable things, which I trust the dear ones of the tallow-dip era observe and enjoy with us. I am sure that they do, though this conviction, founded upon knowl-

edge, will doubtless seem as heretical and absurd to some of our readers as other statements in the science of being.

But how beautiful it is! When one absolutely knows a thing one is never disturbed by what other people think. Having done all, we stand and wait for further light, which is never denied the honest seeker.

To prevent old age we must realize our right to life, health, and good looks, and exercise that right continually.

There are grades of realization. No one has yet come to a perfect recognition of his own God-power. When that time does come—and it is coming—this world will be the theatre of events that have never been approached in the history of the world. Those who have ears to hear let them listen.

In this matter a few persons stand conspicuously in the foreground. They "have not yet attained," but they are fast attaining. But many are pressing on with more or less difficulty. They have turned away from every other method of finding happiness, and success is assured.

The following is a copy of a letter from an enthusiastic worker, which seems to me as fitting an introduction to many other points which I wish to cover as any I could select;

“DEAR FRIEND:

“Won’t you please write something for the folks who daily observe the approach of ‘the sere and yellow,’ and who feel that such decay is very mean and unnecessary? Your ‘Perpetual Youth’ has done me no end of good. Without that I should have grown too discouraged to care whether I lived or died.

“Now I want to know something about processes—ways and means—I am a Sagittarius woman, and practical in the extreme. I know to my perfect satisfaction that the starting-point is realization, and I am getting there as fast as I can. I lived to be forty years old without a glimmer of an idea that I had anything to do with my own soul except that I must not lie, steal, murder, commit adultery, or bear false witness against my neighbor. I never had the slightest desire to do either. My body was to be kept clean and wholesome and clothed according to my means. When I

was poor I wore prints, and when I was rich purple and fine linen. In short, I conformed to every condition with a grace and humility which I supposed was very pleasing to God. In this cheerful salaaming to what I considered God's law, I grew round-shouldered both in mind and body. One day I awoke to the fact that I had greatly changed. Why that particular day I cannot tell you. Perhaps I had been too busy, too absorbed in the everlasting round of social functions to notice this transformation, but the revelation almost paralyzed me. When I spoke to my husband about it he said calmly, 'Why, yes, Anna. You have been falling off for some time.' Then I began to cry, and reproached him for not having told me.

"'But what good would it have done?' he asked.

"'Why, I would have painted and powdered and put on some extra frills, taken more pains with my toilet—'

"'None of those things will ever cover up—that,' he interrupted, "and paint and powder will only make you a laughing-stock.'

"This was unutterably awful. This change in me could only be described by 'that.' Had I been a leper I could not have felt more humiliated, more of an outcast; and yet that

blessed man had no intention of conveying such an idea.

“Most people will say that I was led entirely by my vanity into what is called ‘The New Thought.’ Possibly this verdict is correct. It is true that I had not felt well or strong for some time, and off and on had been under the care of a physician, but these things had not roused me to seek a better way. The reflection in the mirror did. I am thus explicit because I wish you to make no mistake in my motive, and I will also say that by understanding this case you will get at the true inwardness of many other cases. Since my curious awakening I have talked with several women who were brought to their senses by the loss of their beauty and by no other cause. If this is vanity, thank the Lord for vanity.

“Now in regard to processes. The knowledge that there is no one in the universe to dispute my right to health, beauty, and happiness lifted me at once to a place of safety—a place of intelligence to grow from. But I grow slowly. True, I have no doctor and take no medicine in these bright days. I am stronger and have improved in looks. Still, certain things that I eat disagree with me, or I think they do. Some of the things that I used to like are simply disgusting to me now

—meat, for one thing—and yet I fear that I cannot be properly nourished without meat. A good scientist, I am told, should be able to eat, digest, and assimilate anything or any combination of things, however rich. I could do this far more successfully before I ever heard of the new thought than now. According to Christian Science as it has been explained to me, this is all wrong, but I cannot make it seem wrong.

“Query: Is it not as scientific for one to use his mind in the choice of things and methods that are agreeable and appear sensible and helpful, as it is to spend all one’s time in treating one’s stomach to take care of stuff that the stomach doesn’t want and refuses point-blank to have anything to do with?

“It appears to me that every day more and more godly helps are disclosed to me. Should I use them, or should I not?”

The matter of personal vanity has been treated in another chapter. The desire to be beautiful is the God in us crying out for expression. This being the case it is not at all strange, in the least wrong, or anything to be ashamed of, that Truth is sought through the gates of Beauty. It is a perfectly legiti-

mate passageway, and blessed indeed are all who cross that threshold. They may not for some time recover their long - shadowed charms, but they will constantly feel the throb of a new life, and will know that the work of rehabilitation is going on. This is a great comfort to be sure, but it is a very difficult matter for those expectant and impatient ones to keep from watching for results. They seem to think that they can build up in a few weeks that which they have been all their lives tearing down.

There is nothing in the least miraculous or supernatural about this work. The right thought steadfastly held will materialize the right conditions, or truth is not truth. It may be sooner or later, according to the desire, faith, and will of the individual, but there is no lack of time, and so there is no hurry. We have "all the time there is,"—a beautiful thought when one is able to comprehend it. The main thing is to emerge from the darkness. This is usually accomplished by degrees, but, "thanks be to God who giveth us the victory," even a glimpse

of the true light is sufficient to start one on his forward way. More and more illumination follows as he makes himself receptive to it. It is only necessary for us conscientiously to use the light of each day to realize a stronger one on each morrow.

Impatience here, as everywhere else, is a great deterrent force, and should be swept out with the rest of the error thoughts that have kept the world in bondage. Our pain may not all go to-day, our purse may not yet be quite full enough for our needs, and the wrinkles may not seem any less deep, but as long as we *know* that we have turned our faces to the light we have everything to gain and nothing to lose. Above all things, let us cultivate the

### SENSE OF SECURITY.

We are secure. There is no one to molest or make us afraid. We are more or less conscious that we live, move, and have our being in God. We are in him and he in us, and there never was and never can be any separateness.

With this thought always uppermost in our minds, what is there to be disturbed about? This sense of security accomplishes wonderful growing. The hurry of impatience, on the contrary, has the effect of a heavy weight upon our spiritual feet, retarding our progress and balking our desires.

This is one of the most pregnant truths in the prevention of old age, or in the prevention of any other disagreeable and negative condition.

We have been restless and dissatisfied long enough. Let us now come into the kingdom of peace. This kingdom is accessible to all who seek it.

Our correspondent's communication will be considered more in detail in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### PROCESSES.

THE present state of our unfoldment is one of experiment. Two-thirds of the students along mental science lines are in the same condition as the writer of this letter. They are more or less troubled about many things. They are earnest and determined, but this teacher says so and so, and that healer declares something entirely opposite. Then there are the friends and companions who have not yet commenced to stir from their sleep, and who talk and act as persons always do when they are ignorant of what they are talking about.

Now, whether in the prevention or the cure of old age, these things must be determinedly put out of mind. It is no sort of consequence what anybody thinks or says. The rules and regulations which seem so important to others are not for you unless you choose to make

them so. Some of our friends came into the New Thought through a very narrow door. It was a tight squeeze, but it hasn't harmed a son or daughter among them. They are bound to grow into the liberty of the gospel of Christ; and no jurisdiction however eminent, no man-made law however stringent, can hinder this process. Their feet are turned Zionward, and they are making good progress. As expressions of a loving and omnipotent God, divine from the first brain cell to the last atom, we cannot be critical concerning the methods of others. We can bid them God-speed, go our own way, rejoicing in our freedom to do precisely as we please.

Personally I did not come into this domain of thought by means of any school or sect, nor did I have any sectarian limits to grow out of. The impossibility of overcoming illness and trouble in any other way drove me into a heaven right here and now; and here I am proud and happy to stay. This condition is somewhat exceptional, but do not imagine that there was not and is not plenty of over-

coming to do. The heaven consisted at first of the knowledge that not only was this the domain of truth, but that there was no other. This was heaven enough for a little while. The assurance that one positively knows something worth knowing, after years spent in a fruitless quest after health and peace of mind, is bliss unutterable, and there was one woman who placed upon it the highest possible valuation.

There is nothing monotonous about the Creative Principle. Some persons seem born to lead, and others to follow. Then there are those who are laws unto themselves. They find out they are right, and then, as Davy Crockett recommends, "go ahead." They have neither time nor inclination to confer with their fellows on matters of doctrine.

"Get out of my way," they say. "I have put off the old man and am putting on the new as fast and as thoroughly as I can. In the mean time if you don't like the garments I am adopting, look the other way. My robe is gray to-day; it may be green to-morrow. I am experimenting, and in the mean time am

open to your charges of inconsistency; but I ask no odds of any of you. Some time perhaps I shall choose purple or the pure white of the spirit. In the mean time clear the track, for nothing can stay my course."

This is the spirit to cultivate. These tendencies which we call natural, and which lead us to bow and beg, ask advice and follow the bell-sheep, are the garments of the old man. It is easy sometimes to put off a coat or a collar and necktie, metaphorically speaking, but the other vestments stick like burrs when we try to lay them aside. But here is the place for patience. Stop worrying about them, and the first thing we know they drop off apparently of their own accord.

This is an unceasing wonder to me. Fear of trouble, accidents, sickness and death—not for myself, but for those I loved—made my life an indescribable purgatory. For myself I never had the slightest apprehension. When I stopped to reason about this singular condition, I would tell myself that some time I should die because everybody else did; but I am quite sure now that I never quite be-

lieved the story. It seemed to me that I had some sort of a clutch upon the life principle that others did not have. In those days I gave utterance to some statements that horrified the clergy and mortified my family; but these words were powerless because I could give no reason for them. The thought of what seemed to me should be was quickly made null and void by the fact of what was and what always had been. My clear glimpse of God's truth was quickly swept aside by creed and precedent. I know all about it now, and can smile at some of the impotent tussles I indulged in, and which must have won for me the reputation of a high grade of idiocy.

But this fear for others! What an indescribable torture it was! It seemed a real entity sometimes, for it stalked about with me wherever I went. As may be imagined, this was one of the first things to which I turned my attention after I had found this platform of truth to stand upon. Some other conditions were at once improved, but there wasn't a statement I could make, or a thought that I

could think, which had the least effect upon these apprehensions of evil. Indeed, for some time there was a decided aggravation of the state. This was most discouraging. One night after a very disagreeable skirmish with these strong-as-death negations, I opened the Bible and read, “Cast thy burden upon the Lord.” I had come to the place where I almost believed that the Lord God Almighty—not all the Lord God Almighty there is—resided within myself, and that this Lord was able to do what seemed to me very difficult things if I would only trust him. “Cast thy burden upon the Lord.” Cast it. That meant that the most intelligent part of myself, which went by the name of “I,” should take this cowardly fear and cast it on to the still higher self, the God-self, with which part I had not been very intimate. So to the very best of my ability I obeyed the command, declaring that whether it stayed “cast” or returned to me in its full pristine vigor, I would make no more fuss about it. So completely did I fulfil these conditions, that for several days I lost all consciousness of fear as

well as of all thought of what I had done to overcome this habit which for so many years had kept me in such abject bondage. You see this was real giving up, a genuine casting of the burden upon the Lord. There was no string attached to the renunciation. One day, in the simplest manner possible, it dawned upon me that I was no longer afraid, and that many things had recently occurred which once would have tried me almost beyond my ability to bear. I must have been working up to this vantage-ground for some time. Then came the desire for the spoken word, which was supplied by this passage of Scripture. It was just the right moment in my unfoldment for this oft-quoted line to do its work.

Some one will ask, "But who sent you to the Bible? How did it happen? Why couldn't you have received this help long before?"

These were all natural interior processes, and can no more be explained than the flower can be explained from the seed. We plant the seed, and if we unearth it a few weeks later, we see that something has taken place. There

is a growth, but this change is quite inexplicable. If we allow the seed to remain undisturbed in the bosom of its mother, the first thing we know a little green speck appears upon the surface, and we say, "Behold, the seed has sprouted." If we could only consign all of our spiritual seed to the darkness and silence as we trust the seed which never fails to brighten and to nourish the material world, we should be wise indeed. With a few persons this time has already come. They sow the seed and let it alone. They speak the word and it stands fast.

All earnest workers will have tales like these to tell. This obstacle, which seemed insuperable, was rolled away. They did not even know when it went. They admit that perhaps for a long time they had affirmed their superiority to such bondage, but in the hour that they knew not of, the Son of Man came forth and set the captive free. These conclusions always came "in the hour that ye know not of," and these spiritual climaxes are as absolutely unfailing as those we call material ones.

You have recognized for a longer or a shorter period that you were growing old, or that you *are* old. Your eyes are growing dim, or are dim. Your hair is turning gray, or is gray or white. To look at yourself in the mirror is a more trying ordeal than a surgical operation. You have been ill and despondent and afflicted for years; at least, this is what you tell yourself. And now you are reaping the consequences of your worry, anxiety, and sorrow. You have lost your money, buried your friends, swallowed drugs, sojourned in hospitals or health retreats, crossed and recrossed the ocean in search of health and happiness, and here you are, old, ill-looking, and very, very disheartened. Maybe you have had your faces enamelled or skinned and your hair dyed. But there is no way of deceiving the elect; and the elect is the unrecognized God within yourself. At last having boxed the compass of *materia medica* and the art of the masseur and facial decorator, you arrived at the place where you recognized that there was no enduring help in any of these things. All the time the Lord God Almighty

is waiting within you to show forth his marvellous power, but you have been as dead to it as the black earth is dead in consciousness to the seed that is dropped into it. In fact, the Lord God Almighty has been at work every moment of the time, and has softly breathed into you the breath of life as you went on in your experimental work. These experiences were all good, because, as you have proved, nothing else would ever bring you to a knowledge of their futility as happiness producers.

The majority of the people who have become interested in Mental or Christian science have commenced their investigations from the standpoint of utter dissatisfaction and disgust with everything else. It is all Greek to them, but they have listened to the wonderful stories of dominion over sickness and poverty, and they have turned to these methods as drowning men clutch at straws. A little experimenting proves that there is a saving power in mind, and they open themselves to the light as the flowers to the morning sun. Success begets enthusiasm, and for a time everything seems changed for the better.

After a while they note that this pain, which has been such a hindrance to them, has not entirely gone, and there is not the slightest betterment in appearance. They have a little more money than formerly, or their newly acquired wisdom causes it to go further than it ever did before.

This is the place for patience, and a casting of the burden upon the Lord. It is a wise thing to keep this advice in mind and to make frequent trials of its potency if the first efforts do not succeed. But this must not be done in any spirit of haste or anxiety. Be assured that all is going well with you, whether you are constantly aware of this fact or not. Bear in mind the truth that you must be a law unto yourselves. No battle can be won without individuality. If some one tells you that you cannot be a good scientist unless you eat everything that he or she eats, make no response, but partake of what you find most agreeable and that which appears best suited to your condition. If you are told, as I have been, that physical exercise is entirely unnecessary to those who are "in the thought,"

hold your peace, but don't believe a word of it. It is not so; neither is it true that to prove one's scientific understanding it is important to eat baked beans, mince pie, and Rochefort cheese at one sitting. If you think coffee makes you nervous and keeps you from proper rest at night, let coffee alone, though all the world drinks coffee and does not wake from ten o'clock till six. Spend your forces for something better and higher and nobler than in the endeavor to make your stomach harmonize with your palate. If you prefer whole uncooked wheat, apples, and raw potatoes to roast beef and pastry, take your comfort with your own peculiar diet, but don't insist upon your neighbor's adopting it. Some of the healthiest, happiest, and most useful persons that I know eat neither flesh, fish, nor fowl, and prefer raw food to cooked. Who am I that I should criticise their methods, or talk them into doing as I do?

The same rules apply both to the Prevention and the Cure of Old Age. First we must find the God in ourselves. This furnishes a sure foundation to stand upon, as we make

use of all the helps that Omniscience has provided for our use. There is literally no end to these aids. They are to be found in the scientific exercises that well-trained brains have given to the world; in the selection of foods and the adaptation to our needs and desires of the very best things we can find in the material, psychic, and spiritual atmosphere.

First, the God in ourselves.

Second, faith and patience in working out our problems, whether in the recovery from old age or in checking the advance of the enemy so much dreaded by all.

Third, in supplementing these processes of rehabilitation in every sensible, so-called material manner.

Some of these helps will be stated in another chapter.

## CHAPTER IX.

### IN MATERIAL THINGS.

THERE is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the Scriptures in regard to the advanced ages of many of the men and women of the Old Testament time. Indeed, our most scientific scholars declare that these stories are facts, and that the years at that period in the world's history correspond exactly to the length of our years. This latter statement is clearly proven by astronomical and astrological data. So when we read that Methusaleh lived to be nine hundred and sixty-nine years old, there is no reason to doubt the story. This has seemed such an astonishing tale to the majority of thinkers that a great effort has been made to prove that this fine old fellow in reality had no more claim to longevity than the centenarians of our day, because of a different way of computing time. But this reasoning has been shown to be falla-

cious, and now there is no reason to offer for this extraordinary length of days, except that this ancient worthy and others who improved upon the threescore and ten limit did so because of the perfect simplicity of their lives. We are told that they ate herbs and lived out of doors.

That Methusaleh and his brethren kept very close to the heart of nature is an indisputable fact, but whether they lived entirely on herbs or not we have no means of knowing. If herbs constituted the main part of Methusaleh's nutriment, I should like to go and gather some of the same kind. If he ate them from the stalks, that is what I would do. If he stewed them I would follow his lead. Any man who could live in the flesh on this planet for almost a thousand years is a good enough example for me. In the matter of herbs my education is exceedingly limited, but I would be willing to chew catnip indefinitely, if that was what Methusaleh found good for him.

This will doubtless sound very unscientific to some of our readers. "As if it made any

difference what one ate," they will say. "And the idea of going back to the dark ages for examples."

To the best of my knowledge and belief it does make a difference what one eats, and the age that can produce a Methusaleh is the age that suits me. I suppose he ate when he was hungry, drank when he was thirsty, and slept when he was sleepy. He was not kept out nights by his club, or perplexed by his inability to met his club dues. He did not keep his stomach constantly stuffed and fermented by roasts and fries, stewed calves' brains, pig's kidneys, rich pastry, wine and beer. Perhaps if these things had been in evidence at that time, Methusaleh would have upset his stomach and shortened his days the same as his feebler brethren are now doing. That is why I say that the simplicity of the Methusaleh age is very attractive to me. As the wise man declared, "Man has sought out many inventions," and it does seem as if the influence of these products of man's brain had been to keep the whole world wallowing in sin and misery.

“Pessimistic?”

That depends upon the point of view. If the desire for well-established health, perpetual youth, and all the life we want right here on this faithful little planet is pessimistic, I plead guilty to the charge; but who with a single well-developed brain cell could fail to turn a longing glance to the time when men and women were well and strong, when food was not adulterated and folks knew what they were eating, even if it was herbs with perhaps a sprinkling of wild honey.

That these stalwart long-livers of the olden time were to a degree conscious of their right to life, liberty, and happiness, I do not doubt. How much they recognized their divinity, their oneness with the Infinite, it is difficult to tell, but there must have been something that kept them going besides herbs and fresh air. Consciously or unconsciously they realized their power to make conditions for themselves, and they made them. A man who could live nine hundred and sixty-nine years could live forever if he so elected. Probably by the time Methusaleh got to be seven or

eight hundred years old—just a boy—somebody started in with a “new invention” which caused him to begin to think that he was not on the right track. There might have been “I Want to be an Angel,” or a “Sweet By and By” flavor to the new thought or thing. Then he began to shift his will and desire from the present to the future—that future in the skies which has done more than anything else to sap the vitality of the whole race.

Now I have never interviewed Methusaleh; but did I think he would heed my call, I would shout to him a trumpet peal, if for no other reason than to find out what he really did eat and drink. It might not be easy to stop there, for I should also want to know how far the true God-thought held possession of him.

I may get Methusaleh on my spiritual telephone yet. This instrument is really getting into fine operation. When he answers I will tell you everything he says.

I once had a spell of thinking that I would rather have written “The Sweet By and By” than any classic I had ever read. But I

have changed my mind. I wouldn't now have the responsibility of those verses on my shoulders for all the gold in the Klondike. Had I been the author I should have taken it all back before this, and so have made peace with my conscience. Think of intelligent beings who hate to grow old, and who are striving to hold on to their good looks and to prolong life, making a practice of singing "The Sweet By and By."

"Why do you keep on singing that song?" I asked of a friend, who, wearied and disgusted with every other attempt to find health and happiness, had finally turned to the New Thought.

"Why, I sing it because it is beautiful," she answered as the tears of weakness and habit rolled down her cheeks. "Why shouldn't I sing it?"

"You should if you desire to," I told her, "but you will never make any headway in overcoming while you do so. You cannot occupy two places at the same time. You cannot live in the sweet by and by and attend to the things which demand your atten-

tion right here and now. Every thought you put into the future robs the present. Every tear that you shed starts into action the machinery which ploughs furrows in the face and presses the life force from the body. I sang that song myself until I looked like a spook, and all my friends considered me 'as good as gone.' I thought it put me into communication with those I loved. Perhaps it did; but if so, it was anything but a healthy relation. As an inclined plane toward dissolution I consider those verses the easiest and the best oiled of any that I have ever known. You can slide down to music sure enough."

If these arguments are as conclusive with my readers as they were with my audience of one, the result will be most satisfactory. She saw the point, and decided to concentrate her energies on life more abundantly right here and now. The consequence was a renewed vitality, a sensible, healthful look in her face instead of the weak, far-away and vacant expression which had so long held sway.

To those who have felt that this much-sung song is a sweet connecting link between the seen and the unseen, the foregoing strictures will doubtless seem very heartless as well as severe. But they cannot fail to take a different view of the matter when I assure them that I fully believe in the continued existence of the individual, and in his ability under certain conditions to make himself known. We are taking wonderful strides in this matter of spirit intercourse, and my own experiments in mental telegraphy have proved to my perfect satisfaction and delight the things that I have always sensed with my psychic nature. I have demonstrated that the "Sweet By and By" is the same kind of a myth as a heaven in the clouds and a God in the sky. It is all arrant nonsense, and we must not allow ourselves to be sung into the decrepitude of age and the sleep of death. This is something that we must not do if we would grow in grace, health, and beauty here. The affirmations have been plainly stated. When perfectly understood and practised there is no need of denials, but until that joyful time we

are compelled to use the "Thou shalt not" dictum very often.

If the persons who call themselves old and growing old will for the sake of the lesson stop a moment to reflect upon the tears they have wasted, the groans they have uttered which only made them more miserable and everybody in their atmosphere wretched; if they will recall the hard and bitter thoughts they have cherished toward those perhaps whom they most loved, they will be able to form some conception of the reason of their failing powers and their altered appearance. In order to call a halt on approaching age, all of these things must be put out of mind. Don't make a mistake here. The habits of years cannot be broken in a week, but remember this—it will give you beautiful faith and strength all along the line—if you commence this work in earnest you will be constantly helped and cheered. This assistance will be so marked that it will sometimes seem almost supernatural. But there is nothing supernatural. There can be nothing above the natural. You have simply stepped into

harmony with the law, and that step has brought you into relations with everything strong and harmonious in the universe. You are in the ranks of God's soldiers, and strength will be given you to march right along. The old headache or the old heart-ache may occasionally clutch you, and the old life with its emotions and its sentimental and sensational charms may sometimes beckon you, but they are all powerless to detain you, and every hour lessens their hold, or rather your hold upon them. It is we who do the enticing and the clutching. We invite all our foes and entertain them afterward, and then we talk glibly about this or that trouble and misfortune sending us to our graves. Such is the stuff that the so-called tragedies of life are made of.

In the treatment of old age there is a great deal to do, and a great deal that we must not only not do, but we must cease to think about. We must cease to depend upon other persons for help and uplift. We must learn to evolve all these things from ourselves—not an easy task for those who have been "waited upon

hand and foot," as a woman who had commenced to rebel against her years and infirmities once expressed it.

"Why, I haven't buttoned my boots in five years," she said, "nor have I been in the street alone for that length of time. Why, my daughter wouldn't permit it."

"What has your daughter to do with it?" I asked.

"She thinks it would be unsafe, and she is always expecting that I am going to fall or tumble downstairs."

"Did you ever fall downstairs?"

"No, I have never had a serious accident in my life, but you see my child loves me so, and if anything were to happen to me she would be inconsolable. *I am all she has got.*"

How many of the world's inhabitants are just in this position! They are all somebody has got, and somebody is all they have got. The fear of death, as St. Paul says, keeps them all their lives subject to bondage. For this reason the daughter dogs her mother's every step, making her a chronic invalid, and

literally pushing her into old age and the grave.

If the daughters do not desire to grow old—and they do not—they must call a halt upon such practices, and the mothers must commence to wait upon themselves.

“Why do you not button your own boots?” I asked the dearly loved and much watched woman. “You certainly have the use of your hands.”

“Oh, yes; but leaning over might bring on vertigo. You see I am very fleshy, and my stomach is so in the way.”

She meant her abdomen, and she told the truth. It was large and very much in the way, but not more so than those of scores of women whom we daily meet on the street. And what had caused this deformed condition, for it was nothing else?

Intemperance in eating and lack of exercise, and the settling down to the belief that whatever little jurisdiction she once had over her own life was now at an end. In other words, she “lived, moved, and had her being” in her daughter, and the daughter in her.

For ages such willing service and loving dependence has been considered most beautiful; but let us analyze it for a moment. Fear and selfishness were the prime factors in this case as in almost every other, and the destruction of individuality followed as a matter of course. There wasn't a sound spiritual fibre in either mother or child. They were pulp.

"But what can I do?" the mother asked tearfully. "I knew that I have no business to depend so much, and I knew that my daughter has other uses for her strength and time. But I suppose she feels that she can only have me a short time at the longest, and she wants to hold me in the body just as long as she can."

"Why don't you hold yourself in the body?" I inquired.

"I—hold—myself?"

This seemed a new idea, although I had previously spent some time explaining the same matter.

"Why should your child have more power in this direction than you have? It is *your* body, is it not?"

"I used to think it was God's body," she replied.

"Well, it isn't now. It's nobody's body. You have shut your God up in a closet, and you and your daughter are trying to run the business between you, but you can't do it."

"But what shall I do?"

"Put your daughter out of the partnership and take God in."

"But you don't know my child. She would be broken-hearted."

"I'll risk the breakage. In a little while she will be very much relieved. It wouldn't be in nature for her not to be. What do you think her sensations will be when she sees you a live, wide-awake, busy woman, able to help yourself, and by the force of your example to help others to freedom?"

"But what shall I do first?"

"Well, *I* would button my boots if I burst something."

"But suppose Alice refuses to let me?"

"Throw a boot at her and knock her down. Take a slipper to her; do anything. Prove to

her that you have opened the door of the closet and let your God out."

There was a hearty laugh at this advice, and I felt sure that the battle would soon begin.

"But after all is said and done, it is a very small thing to button one's shoes."

Here was an immediate and eager reaching out for a larger opportunity, as there always is when the truth has worked its way into the inmost parts.

"That will be a beautiful beginning; and it will not be long before you will find yourself taking some vigorous daily exercise without a guardian or chaperone."

"But *do* you quite realize that I am what the world calls an *old* woman—past seventy, you know, when the years are counted."

"A hundred years is as one day with God, and time is not to be divided into periods of growth and decadence. Now the question is, Do you really want to stop your dying, or would you prefer to go on with it? You can do either. Trust in your daughter is simply launching you into feebleness, senility, and

death. If you like that kind of travel, the road is open to you."

"Great heavens, I don't like it! I never liked it, but I thought it had to be. I'll turn about and take the other way, and do the very best I can."

This was dose enough for one day. The matter of fastening her own shoes was a very simple one considered by itself, but I knew that, having performed this operation, she would immediately cast about for something else to do in the same line of personal helpfulness. And I was not disappointed—no, not even in the shrinkage of the abdomen. An intelligent thought of her own God-given right to symmetry, ease, and beauty, combined with common sense, which is God also; in reference to proper food and exercise, wrought a marvellous change which no one could understand save those who were in the secret.

## CHAPTER X.

### “SUPPLEMENTARY PROCEEDINGS.”

SOLOMON with all his pretensions to knowledge never said a wiser thing than did a friend who, after listening to a very marvellous account of certain electrical apparatuses, remarked as follows:

“There never was a story told yet too big for me to believe.”

According to the opinion of her companions on this occasion she was, if not a fool, at least a most gullible creature. But the machine got to working, and the doubting Thomases marched along in a row to see it.

We are living in a wonderful age. Things are coming into climaxes mighty fast. Here and there, all over the world, men and women are speaking the word of health, opulence, and continued life on this planet. This word is the vital leaven which is leavening the whole lump. The raising of humanity may

seem very slow and sporadic to the impatient ones, and those without faith, but they are quite mistaken. The God within and the God without are felt and understood as never was God felt and understood before. Even the most apathetic and pessimistic persons occasionally rouse up long enough to wonder what it is that makes these days so different from all the other days they have known. It is like a rush of mighty waters, and more people than we imagine hear the sound thereof.

Viewed from some aspects the whole world seems very weak and wicked. We have our multi-millionaires and our gigantic trusts and corporations that appear to be sweeping everything but themselves and their especial interests from the face of the earth. But God reigns, and they cannot do it.

In contradistinction to this appearance we have the poverty-stricken, the lame, the halt, the blind, the beggar in his rags. These people are as numerous as ever, but we discern that something has happened even to them. The leaven is surely working. Some whisper has vibrated way down the line that poverty

is not a God-sent condition, and that there are better ways of materializing wealth than by the crowding out and trampling down of others. Somebody has said something about "the substance of God" and the table that is spread with this substance—a table from which no one is excluded.

"What are you doing now for a living?" a man was asked who had been compelled to give up his small store on account of a new neighbor who sold everything, and much cheaper than he could afford to do.

"I have gone into partnership with Almighty God," was the answer, "and it pays."

The questioner did not in the least understand what this meant, but he had reason to believe afterward that some unusual force had been at work in this man's behalf.

In the recovery from old age it is necessary that we constantly recognize this partnership, or more, strictly speaking, this oneness with the All-Good. Then, and only then, are we individuals. It is impossible to feel too independent or self-sufficient.

"Through the God-power vested in me I

am equal to anything that I choose to do," is a statement which we cannot make too often in our attempts to overcome.

These affirmations will tend to keep us up to the mark of the high calling, but they must be supplemented by earnest and untiring effort.

"What kind of effort?"

Physical effort.

You may say all these beautiful things, but if you don't *do* something you will die.

"Faith without works is dead," our elder brother told his followers, and this is as true to-day as when these words were uttered centuries ago.

Suppose, for instance, that under the dominion of the race thought of age, and your consequent inability to do anything for yourself, you have become bent in figure and stiff in your joints. You rise with difficulty and walk with pain. Now, do not believe that you can dispel these evidences of old age by any process of affirmation or denial. No, indeed. You have got to get up and keep getting up until you have taught these joints

and limbs their proper lesson. To be delivered from the stoop which you yourself have fastened upon yourself, you must not only direct your mental forces that way, but you must take the physical exercises that will tend to change that condition. You could sit in your chair and declare your dominion over these states with all the power and eloquence of which you were capable, and the stoop and the weakness would still be in evidence.

“For mercy’s sake let me alone,” said an “elderly” man who had become somewhat interested in the new thought, but who had made very little headway because faith and works were strangers; in other words, because he had become possessed by the idea that all he had to do was to sit on the veranda and declare his freedom.

“Let me alone,” he went on impatiently. “I need no exercise. I can trust my God to do all this work for me,” and he went on trusting something that he called God. It wasn’t God. It was pure and unadulterated laziness.

This man’s wife took a different view of

things. She realized at once that there was something for her to do as well as to say. In order to make the word effectual she must do the deeds. This woman, who had by wrong thinking drifted into the state of infirmity called old age, had a world of work to do in order practically to demonstrate that she was on the up-grade; and this knowledge kept her alert in every fibre of her being.

One day her husband, who had been discussing metaphysics with a neighbor, turned to her and said: "Why don't you say something, mother?"

"I've been saying something for seventy years," she replied, "and now I'm doing something."

After this she took a three-mile walk, and came back to her dinner hungry and rosy, and with a light in her eyes that shed a radiance upon everything about her. Her husband sat in his arm-chair, and divided his time between evolution, re-incarnation, and the power of the individual ego. He hobbled into the dining-room and ate voraciously of everything on the table, affirming that the

person who refused to indulge his appetite to the utmost was not a good scientist.

Well, one day he fell in a heap after one of these hearty meals. Medical verdict, "Heart failure after a severe attack of indigestion."

The minister who attended the funeral probably told the surviving friends that "man was of a few days and full of trouble," and that "God had taken this useful citizen, this dear husband and father, to himself."

What could be more false or more ridiculous? This work of undoing was entirely performed by the man himself. He profaned "the Temple of the Living God," and kept on profaning it after having declared himself a Christian metaphysician.

I am not acquainted with any man who calls himself a scientist who has the habit of drinking spirituous liquors, but I do know many professed scientists, both men and women, who eat intemperately. They tell you that God has provided all the materials, and that they have a perfect right to everything that is to be found in their Father's kingdom. Here again: "Man has sought out many inventions,"

and while God has provided the original substance, it does seem as if the devil had been employed to make some of the combinations; for between the grease and the gravies, the mix-ups of different portions of the flesh of animals, the sickening concoctions for which even the French *chefs* are puzzled to find names, the lovers of simple food find themselves badly handicapped when away from their own tables. These things are all good in themselves and where they belong, but they are not good for us when stirred up together, except as the working out of a natural law is good by reason of the experience that we derive from it. The effects of intemperance in eating are as marked as the effects of intemperance in drink, and quite as demoralizing. After a careful and unprejudiced observation I firmly believe that if the race had been intelligent in the matter of food, we should have giants and double centenarians walking our streets to-day. They might have beaten Noah and Methusaleh in the matter of longevity. From Noah to David was a steady decline. Considerable of a tumble from

nine hundred and sixty-nine and nine hundred and fifty to three-score years and ten, with forty years as the average number.

There is no doubt in my mind that this falling-off was occasioned by the encroachments of what most people call civilization. Trouble commenced as soon as this era of simplicity was invaded by the complex. The first stew may have been responsible for the first stomach-ache and the anxiety that naturally followed such an unprecedented condition. One thing is sure, there has been plenty of stewing ever since, both in the pot and in the feelings of men. Aches and pains and griefs and fears have predominated. The healthy person has been the exception for more years than we know how to count, and to-day the man or woman who lives to be one hundred years old is counted a curiosity. He may be stone deaf, or blind as a bat, and too feeble to get up and down without help, but he has exceeded the record, broken the law of three-score and ten, and people will travel miles to congratulate him. But this isn't life. He is of no use. He has no enjoyment. Nobody

wants him, and when the flickering breath at last stops, it is recognized as a good thing for all concerned.

O friends, can you not see what stupid nonsense all this death and dying is? And can it be possible that you are so dull as not to be able to feel what an important part the proper selection, quality, and quantity of food exert upon your lives?

“But what are you going to do with the ninety-first psalm?” some friend will ask.

“I am going to love and cherish it, to read and reread it, and, better than all, to believe it.

“‘ He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.’ ”

Where is the man that so dwelleth? He certainly cannot be the man who is all the time thinking of his dinner and suffering from the effects of it. “The secret place of the Most High” must be a place of ease and comfort, of absolute faith and trust. No person can either trust or repose who is dominated by his appetite, who eats indigestible

food or too much food. To be in this secret place is to be in the kingdom of heaven. No pestilence can come nigh such a dwelling. Everything conspires for peace, because discord cannot live in this atmosphere.

Many people are approximating to this kingdom, and there may be a few who reside there more or less permanently. It is the only safe place and is well worth striving for, but it can never be reached through the gratification of an appetite, though all food partaken of should be enjoyed. One should never eat unless one is hungry, and to fill one's stomach with undesirable stuff for the sake of sociability is a sin and a shame. Dinner parties with their endless courses and abominable messes, to say nothing of the insincerity and the striving for effect which generally obtain, are responsible for more senility and decay than people suppose. Who can fail to grow silly, weak in the legs, and large in the abdomen, who is in the habit of spending three hours a day swallowing raw beef, chopped flesh, stuffed birds, calves' brains, lambs' kidneys, grease galore, pastries, creams, and wines?

Such a performance once a month would soon provide me with a ticket of leave. If obliged to go through such a *menu*, even I would pipe my feeble lay to these words:

"I would not live alway,  
I ask not to stay,  
Where dish after dish  
Comes sliding this way."

And yet no one enjoys good things—wholesome things—more than the writer, or the lightness and brightness of a properly served meal. But the cannibalistic and gormandizing tendencies which to a degree—not a very exaggerated degree—once distinguished me are no longer in evidence.

Let us not be deceived, my friends, by the specious reasoning of those persons who are seeking the higher life, but who do their preaching beside the flesh-pots of Egypt. To enjoy our God, to make the most of our lives and constantly to grow in grace and health, youth and beauty, we must keep our bodies clean and pure. Anything that pollutes the body brings everything undesirable in its train—sickness, sorrow, old age, and death.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE IGNORANT WORD.

EVERY man must be a law unto himself. He always is this, whether he knows it or not. The word of the person stands, whether that word be spoken for health or disease, immortal youth or old age.

The true word is the word of intelligence. This word speaks for health and happiness in a thousand different ways, while the ignorant word constantly materializes in error.

I am perfectly willing to admit that the truth of these statements is an exceedingly difficult one to grasp; and why should it not be, when all the ages have taught us something exactly opposite? Considering precept and tradition, man has proved himself a pretty brave fellow. Taught to believe that the scourges of sickness and death were placed upon him by God from the very start, he has shown considerable grit and courage in man-

aging the infernal conditions as well as he has. In living—or rather staying—and dying in ignorance, he has proved himself worthy of the brightest and most felicitous immortality. When one reflects upon the depths of degradation and despair which a mistaken conception of God has brought to God's children, it seems a miracle that there could have been found one single man in the whole misunderstood universe able even for a few years to do a stroke of work or perform an act of kindness. But in the face and eyes of the cursed present and the equally uncertain and cursed future they have indeed performed heroic deeds.

The fact of the matter really is, that if all these people had absolutely believed in hell after death, and the necessity of sickness and poverty, they would not have tried to evade, ignore, and overcome them as they certainly have. These things have been fought valiantly though ignorantly, showing plainly that deep down in the heart of man the voice of a reigning God was steadfastly sending forth its protests. Little by little has the race

awakened from its hideous nightmare dream, and now at the close of this most remarkable century, the most wonderful in every respect of any that has preceded it, there are to be found men and women who know that the true reign of the true God has commenced. God is known for what he is, and not for what the ages have ignorantly taught.

The ignorant word is not uttered so often as formerly. In many instances we find it curiously changed and modified. It may be just as illogical as ever, but there is an interrogation mark after it, or an atmosphere of indecision prevades it. Thoughts are projectiles, and the God-power that is now behind this God-thought is loading and discharging with the most accurate and beautiful precision. Folks are being hit in every part of the earth, and wondering what is the matter with them. They are getting wicked, they tell their friends and neighbors. They do not care so much about forms and ceremonies. It is hard work to sit through an hour's sermon. The old hymns have an alien sound, and the once eloquent long prayer is simply sounding

brass and tinkling cymbal. It is all very strange. They have never had anything to do with these new-fangled doctrines. They are not acquainted with any scientists. What can it mean? they ask.

It means that it is in the air, and there is no escape from it. It means that the God in one man is literally obliged to wake up the God in another man, and that the telepathic signals of science are being felt and comprehended in greater or less degree by every really intelligent man and woman on the globe.

Is not this a grand and a comforting outlook? And, thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, it is all true!

In this wonderful meantime how shall we more quickly and completely change the ignorant for the intelligent word? How shall we learn to call things by their right names instead of the names that we have been taught to call them? To accomplish this involves a complete change in our lives; and this is not always or often an easy process.

One very ignorant word that we have

spoken for ourselves and others is that of ownership. The most awful thought that can be presented to most persons is the true one, that they do not own their children.

“Unclutch and let go entirely,” a wise teacher told one of her students, who had been the victim of intense anxiety for many years.

“Let go of what? Let go of life?” the woman asked.

“No, you can’t let go of that. Life possesses you. In other words, you are life—not a good type of intelligent life at present, but getting there. I mean unclutch, and let go of your children entirely.”

“Oh, I never thought that you could say that to me!” was the sad, almost tragic response. “Why, there is no torture that I should not deserve if I shirked the responsibility of my children. I brought them into the world; they are surely mine.”

“Nothing is yours but yourself. That is all yours. You have no right to prevent the unfoldment of individuality in those children, or rather in those men; and this you have

been and are still doing. I am sure that things will speedily mend if you will let them go their way."

"Oh! but Jimmy! Think of Jimmy without his mother's hand to guide him, his mother's heart to sympathize with him when he is in trouble," wailed the fond parent.

"Jimmy" was the prodigal who never made long trips from home, but was constantly going and constantly coming, and so repentant when money gave out. More fatted calves had been killed and roasted for Jimmy than one could count, and he knew that he should always find his mother watching by the window, all ready to light the fagots for the feast. She had weakened and sickened and aged in this process of expectancy, but Jimmy didn't see it. Jimmy was having a good time, or thought he was, in wasting his mother's substance in riotous living; and the foolish parent labored under the mistaken idea that she was guiding Jimmy.

How many mothers do we see as this mirror is held up to view? Oh, the awful sacrifice of calves on this altar of ownership!

Such ignorance is enough to make the angels—yea, and the archangels cry their eyes out; and they certainly would do so if they did not see that these mothers and these Jimmies could learn their lessons in no other way.

This special parent was slowly awakening, and had made a few notable conquests in other lines, but when Jimmy's dethronement was suggested, the mother heart took fright at once. It was no use to ask her to let go of Jimmy. She could agree to any other sacrifice, but not this one.

This is a fine example of one sort of clutching, and there is not a reader who will not have some such mother and child in mind. Now, money was not good for Jimmy, and so many fatted calves were tiresome, even to the prodigal, whose only desire was to steady up for a spell in order to start out again with full pockets, in search of that will-o-the-wisp happiness which always had and ever would mock and elude him.

To let go of one's children is indeed a very new doctrine, but it is the only thing that will

bring peace to either parent or child. For ages it has been considered the imperative duty of parents—especially of mothers—to sacrifice themselves for their offspring. This sacrifice consisted in the renunciation of health, wealth, happiness, good looks, and everything that makes life desirable. The mother who does not worry about her straying child is heartless; but was there ever one who did not? and was this worry ever known to bring a single prodigal to repentance?

True growth is impossible when one selfishly clutches anything—husband, wife, children, friends, lovers, or money. Every earthly thing should be held with a loose grasp, not on the theory which has so long prevailed that an angry God will remove all our idols, but upon the principle that as long as we are holding on to one thing with all our might, we are hermetically sealed against the reception of every gift worth having.

Motherhood is a very sacred and beautiful thing, but there is a marvellous difference between true motherhood and sentimental motherhood. Jimmy's mother is a type of

the foolish and selfish mother, and the family is numerous. Jesus is thought by many to have spoken very harshly to his mother, when in answer to her question of where he was going, and why he did not come home, where all young men ought to be found, he replied: "Wist ye not that I go about my Father's business?"

I always supposed that this settled it for all time with Mary. She like other mothers wanted her boy under her wing, but this was not his place, and in those memorable words he made her understand the situation. This response of our elder brother would be a good one for parents to make to their children. Could they only see plainly enough to say to them: "I nursed you and brought you to manhood and womanhood as faithfully as I knew how. You have chosen your path, which is not my path. It is not a good one, and I have warned you against it. Now work out your own salvation. *I* go about my father's business."

This would be sensible as well as highly scientific. Our calf-fed prodigals would then

keep on eating husks, or would earn food more in consonance with their appetites.

The motherly endeavor to avert the effect of a cause has made no end of mischief. It never was done and never can be, except by the use of influence, the payment of money, or by some covering-up process. This may seem to work for a while, but there is not one case in a thousand that was ever radically helped by such means.

"If you write another book on progressive lines, do take up the parent and child question," a friend has written. "Is there any way to make mothers more sensible? Fathers, it seems to me, are either too strict and cruel or too indifferent. Many of them do not seem to care in the least what becomes of their sons; and so the whole awful responsibility devolves upon the mothers. I have so many sweet and noble friends who are weighed down to the very earth by disobedient and dissipated children, that I find myself constantly casting about for some one to say the sensible lifting word. *I* know that they should be allowed to go their own way, that every

sentimental prop should be withdrawn, and I also know that they are all forging along by the hardest road toward their own true estates. But you cannot make the average suffering mother believe this. You know it is true, do you not?"

Yes, indeed, I know it, and I wish I could stamp upon these pages some thought in this regard so helpful and comforting that it would lift every sorrowing mother out of the vale of tears into the bright sunlight of faith and joy.

There is one supreme debt that these women owe to themselves and afterward to humanity. It is to live instead of die, to recuperate instead of disintegrate; and this can never be accomplished when they are minding other people's business, even though these other people are what they are pleased to call "bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh," their "very own children." Responsibility ends, or should end, when these children mark out their own way and elect to follow it. This road may apparently lead to Tophet, but it doesn't. It is Tophet all the

way along, to be sure, and there is always a fetching-up place, which is a merciful place after all, because the lesson that could not be learned in any other way is doubtless learned there. Effect has followed cause, and the grand summing-up is inevitable:

“Loose him and let him go. Ephraim is joined to his idols. Let him alone.”

It is impossible to reach these foolish ones by words of warning, or of advice however unselfish and well intentioned, and anxious thought is worse than meddling words. But many a wanderer has been brought home to stay by means of the free and loving thought. One case where every influence had failed was touched and reclaimed by the total renunciation of responsibility by both father and mother, and the steadfast holding of this thought: “You are free to choose your own way. Our desire is for your highest good, and that good we believe you are evolving. You are your own master, and we are simply your loving friends.”

One never-to-be-forgotten day this son walked in and said to his mother: “Do you

know I have felt very queer lately? It has seemed to me just as if you and father had unriveted a link in a very strong chain and set me free."

"That is precisely what we have done," his mother replied.

"Do you mean that you have left me free to get drunk?" was the next question.

"Yes, free to get drunk or to do anything else you may feel like doing."

"And father too. Does he feel the same way?"

"And father too."

"Do you know, mother, that I don't believe I could drink another drop to save my life? I know I never shall."

"But why?"

"Ask somebody who knows more than I do; but I somehow feel like a *man*."

There are other instances as marked as this, showing not only the power of thought to touch the spot, but the wonderful desire and longing of every human soul for liberty.

How many dear ones have been held in bondage by persistent nagging and anxious

thought we do not know, but their number is legion.

"Loose them and let them go." To do this we first loose ourselves. The rest is easy.

This subject has been taken up in considerable detail because of the ravages which have been wrought upon the mothers of the world by a mistaken idea of their responsibility.

There is no prevention and no cure for old age while such conditions obtain.

## CHAPTER XII.

### DUTY.

DUTY, as generally understood, is an abominable word, and wields an abominable influence. Look at it as it stands before you. What character is there in these four letters—Duty?

“Du”—signifying do—at least that is my interpretation of it—“ty” ty—duty.

Do, do, do, and keep on doing for everybody but yourself. You are not concerned in it. It is simply your business to do whether you like it or not, or whether you are able to do it or not. Duty-doing in the common acceptance of that term is body-dying. Flat, feeble, and sentimental though the word is, it holds more suicide than almost any other word in the language. It has brought decrepitude and old age to those who were young in years, and has ruined countless lives.

The most of what goes as duty is a mistaken sense of responsibility. We constitute ourselves our brother's keepers, and it is always proved, when too late to be of any service, that the majority of these brothers would have been a great deal better off if left to themselves.

"Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

Think of it a moment! Can we not all say with perfect truth that the principal desire of our lives is now, and always has been, to be let alone? Have we relished interference? Have we enjoyed being told when to get up and when to sit down, when to go out and when to come in, what to eat and what not to eat, what companions to choose and what persons to avoid? Have you amiably accepted this advice from your friends, your husbands, your wives, your sisters and brothers, your children? And how about you parents—you who are holding on to your "own flesh and blood" with the clutch of desperation?

You know you in your turn have chafed under it, rebelled with all your soul against it, many,

many times, and most of you will recall that you have done a thousand things that you would never have thought of doing if you had not been sure of opposition from some quarter.

Now, there is nobody on earth who likes such interference any more than you do. We find many simpletons who are forever asking advice and never taking it; but they don't count. They fly hither and yon, and finally—it may take a long time—come to the conclusion that the oracle is within themselves.

How many times have we heard these tried ones exclaim, and how many times have we spoken the very same words, "Oh, if I only knew my duty in this matter!" No strain is oftener heard than this one, and it must be admitted that it is sometimes exceedingly difficult to know how and just where to draw the line. That a few persons are very selfish, apparently utterly destitute of the milk of human kindness, goes without saying, but they are not in evidence very often after all. The majority of the people we meet are constantly on the lookout for opportunities to be

kind, hunting jobs of misery as it were. It is a remarkable thing to note how fast these chronic sympathizers grow old. They take Mrs. Smith's typhoid to bed with them, and rise in the morning quite proud to say that they haven't slept a wink all night.

Oh, yes, there is a great deal of pride that inheres in this sort of care for others, so you need not shake your heads. We have not been wholly free from it.

This misunderstanding of the "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" command is a fertile wrinkle-producer. It just ploughs lines into "the human face divine." And why does it do this?

First, because of a peculiar poison which this mental condition produces in the body; and next, because of the habit of drawing and contorting the countenance into sympathetic or agonized expression. So you see there is an outside as well as an inside to attend to. Some so-called scientists stoutly deny this proposition. They may be very particular about the fit of their gowns, and their hats may be adorned with the finest imitation of the floral kingdom,

but the face—oh, that is a different matter. The face must be let entirely alone. It is not scientific to soften the skin, although it may be as dried up and as weatherbeaten as an old barn-door. I have always taken an entirely opposite view. Whatever will help one more perfectly to express the wholesomeness and the beauty which all desire to show forth is as proper and legitimate a thing to use as is water for the cleansing of our bodies.

“Oh, I wonder if she believes in rouge!” some of our readers will exclaim.

That is a question to be left to individual taste and good sense. I do not think that either rouge or powder is necessary to any skin. If I did, I should certainly use it, and ask no one’s consent to do so. To my mind both of these materials are harmful. They clog the pores and produce roughness and unsightly eruptions. But there are most grateful and wholesome emollients, which help to keep the cuticle fresh and to soften the hard lines which sickness, trouble, and the minding of other people’s business have produced.

There is no more imperative duty in this

period of the world's history than for women to look their very best, and it is their business to employ any truly healthful process to facilitate that most desirable end.

It is true that if we had been living in conscious unity with the divine we should need no external aids. Also that if we are now living in such harmonious relations we shall presently be free from blemishes. But there is a big gap to fill up, a great chasm between the days of our ignorance and the dawn of our intelligence, between the days when we scattered the seeds of wrinkles and weakness and old age and that beautiful morning when we awoke to the knowledge that there was not the slightest need of any of these things. But error seed brought forth an error harvest. As you look at yourselves you see nothing but the evidences of devastation. What shall you do?—leave it so, or endeavor to supplement the inner processes by whatever sweet and gracious means that your newly awakened consciousness may suggest?

There is but one sensible answer to this question. Do what you call your duty by

yourselves, and endeavor to appear to others as young, as pretty, as sweet and attractive as possible.

It is not true that, because you have commenced to think good and logical thoughts and practise upon mental science lines, you can immediately put to rout every negative condition. When you are told that you or anybody else can drink any deadly draught without harm, don't run to the drug store for poison in order to try the experiment; and if you contemplate treading on adders, keep on your shoes and stockings. Right there is where the mind comes in, though some radical scientists will not admit it. That such harmony is our potential possession I have no doubt, but the adders of our own nature are the enemies we need to tread on. When we encounter the snakes of jealousy, envy, and untruth in others and do not feel a sting or a pang, we can begin to think about going out into the byways and highways to hunt for other adders to step on. But we really shall not need to do this in order to get a diploma in the overcoming class.

The mind that is engaged in the work of renewing will open itself to light from every quarter. It will desire wisdom beyond every other possession, and wisdom will surely and steadily flow in. The willing soul desirous of truth has only to keep still and listen. It need not discuss metaphysics or rush to the rescue of maligned metaphysicians. It realizes first of all that it has its own work to do, and that this work is of such mighty import that there is no time to spare in the officious business of solving the problems of other people.

Duty does not stand for kindness or affection. Remember that. The very pronunciation of the word suggests something hard and disagreeable. "It is my duty to take care of this or that relative," says some one. "He has no one else to help him. What will you do with that horn of the dilemma?"

It is impossible to answer such a question because one has no knowledge of the especial circumstances. It might be the worst thing that could befall this man to be cared for in this way. It might not be; but this I am sure

of—if duty is all there is in the case, it must be a hard position for any one to occupy.

It takes wisdom to discover what responsibilities to assume and what ones to disregard. It is easy to theorize, but we are all occasionally confronted by conditions that we cannot put aside, because for some reasons these conditions are our own to meet and manage to the best of our ability. If we are willing to be possessed by love and guided by wisdom we shall make easy work of things that at first sight seem very disagreeable. Whatever we make a task of and sigh and cry because we have it to do, is a destroyer of health and a shortener of life. If we would grow younger instead of older, what we must not do is to load ourselves with the burdens of others. It is a hard habit to break, and may seem to some of our readers like very heartless advice. Old things must pass away, and old habits must be broken. This is the only way to insure health, wealth, happiness, and immortality in the flesh. Old age is a foolish phantom, which intelligence is bound to chase out of existence.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### FOOD AND EXERCISE.

IN the present condition of our anatomical structures, our "houses of flesh," it does make a great difference to health and life what kind of food we eat and how much. This statement will be contradicted by cranks, but it can be substantiated by facts, and this is more to the purpose.

The proper thought given to the care of our bodies will ultimately result in their perfection, and this perfecting process must of a necessity carry us away from the crude, coarse, and cannibalistic diet that has so long obtained. It is heartening to know that many people are turning naturally away from the flesh of animals, while others are experimenting with the atmosphere as the source of all material supply—the very substance of God. These investigators claim that they can

accomplish more work and take more comfort on an air diet supplemented by whole wheat (uncooked) once a day with fruit, than they ever accomplished or enjoyed in all the days of their lives.

These trials and successes are beautiful prophecies of a condition that will later on become general. The average man will not subsist on atmosphere, whole wheat, and fruit, or atmosphere and nuts, but the happy medium will be found where all the simple and healthful products of the earth will be used for man's refining sustenance.

There is no doubt in my mind that a month's diet on atmosphere alone would be the means of salvation to many a hopeless soul. It would not add to the weight or increase the amount of adipose tissue, but it would give nature a chance to dispose of some of the surplus material which has been the cause of so much discomfort. Atmosphere does not have to be cooked. A little more of it than is usually taken into the lungs is inhaled several times a day by certain inspiring exercises, which open the pores, feed the tis-

sues, and bring the body into a condition of health and grace. These exercises are not in the least difficult or fatiguing, and can be taken in connection with more solid food than that derived from the atmosphere. Those persons who have been in the habit of calling themselves "*very old*" have used them with the greatest benefit.

"Why did I not know of these helpful things long ago?" a woman of seventy inquires. "And why did I not know that my stomach needed a rest, and that overeating was the cause of all my trouble? I have paid doctor's bills to the amount of thousands of dollars, and not a single medical adviser, either here or abroad, ever hinted that I ate too much. Dietary changes have been prescribed, it is true, such as an exclusive diet of meat or a preponderance of milk, etc., but this is all. The first question always was, How is your appetite? 'You must eat to keep up your strength, and three meals a day are absolutely essential.' All the time I was putting on flesh, and at last became so heavy that I had the greatest difficulty to move out

of my chair. But still it was eat, eat, eat. At last in despair I took up the study of mental science and became greatly interested in it. Never before had I suspected that it was possible for me to say no and yes to my body. Oh, it was a sublime revelation when that knowledge flashed upon me! Just then a friend sent me your 'Perpetual Youth,' and that helped me to gird on the armor and fight the battle out. I stopped thinking about my age and all the years I had wasted, and started in to do my best. But what was I to do with this mountain of undesirable flesh? Ah, that was a momentous question. That something could be done I had no doubt, but what? I consulted a healer and put myself under her care. She was very much annoyed when I spoke of diet and exercise. The proper mental concentration would do the work, she said. All that I needed to do was to think that I had no more flesh than was desirable, and that I was absolutely free from every disturbing condition. I reread 'Perpetual Youth,' and found that I had something to do for myself that nobody on God's

earth could do for me. It was to use my mind in an entirely different manner. I was—as you so tersely put it in your poem—to 'get up or get out.' I got up. I instituted my own fast, and lived on atmosphere alone for twenty-two days. The first three days my stomach cried out bitterly, and I had all I could do to keep from humoring it. The rest of the time I was perfectly comfortable. I took the required exercise and slept like a baby. I dropped about a pound of flesh a day. I should have continued this fast longer if it had not been for the solicitude of my family. For three months since I have eaten one good meal each day, twelve o'clock being the hour that pleases me best. I can wait until one or later with perfect ease if necessary. This meal is varied by means of vegetable soups, beans, peas, asparagus, and other vegetables, fruits, nuts, cereals, whole wheat bread, ice cream, and many other perfectly healthful articles of diet. I am now of normal weight, energetic, healthy, happy, and useful. I have no age, to speak of, in these days.

“If I desired two or even three meals a day I should eat them, but I do not need or care for any more food than this midday meal provides. In conclusion, I will say that I do not believe the combined efforts of all the healers on this planet would have delivered me from the grievous burden I was carrying, as I delivered myself by my own peculiar mental concentration. *I breathed. I walked. I exercised. I said to my body, I am your mistress. You have no other in the universe. I fasted, and I am free.*

“I have told you these things because of my desire to help others. Do strive to impress people with this truth—the biggest truth that was ever told—that they must largely do their own work, and that most of them are committing hourly suicide by over-eating and by eating improper food. Several of my friends have come into the most wonderful harmony by following my example, and the work is going on beautifully. There is no need of helplessness, of sickness, of poverty, of old age and death. This I know.”

Such accounts as the above are constantly

received at this office. This one was chosen to print because of its comprehensiveness, and because the writer was on the so-called "elderly" list.

Then the communications from women who have spent their lives catering to appetite and cooking the food for their families. Some of these would bring tears from a stone. The tired-to-death farmer's wives with their three meals a day and five-o'clock breakfasts, to say nothing of washing and ironing and scrubbing. Now there never was any legitimate reason for all this drudgery. One meal a day could well have been spared and the others so simplified as to make life a delight instead of a torture.

"I knew two-thirds of the people whose bodies are in this cemetery," said a physician, who had studied causes, to a visitor as they passed this place of weeping willows and marble headstones. "And the majority of them are women who cooked themselves into their graves, and men who ate the stuff the women prepared. There are a few children here, and a few—a very few—persons who

lived to be old in spite of their stuffing; but I always call this the cemetery of amazing stupidity. Perhaps these places are all alike. I guess they are, but you see I know this one." This reminds me of the story of the Maine woman who was found weeping one day by a neighbor.

"What is the matter?" her friend inquired.

"Vittles is the matter," was the sobbing response.

"Why, you ain't wanting anything, be you?" said her companion. "I allers thought you had vittles enough."

"Vittles enough? I should say so. When I think of the vittles I have cooked for that man"—pointing to a stalwart figure mowing in the field—"how many vittles I've cooked for that man to gormandize, I'm sick as a dog. And when I think of all the vittles I've got to cook, I'm ready to lay down and die."

We meet these miserable creatures at every turn, and there is not a very great difference between the women who cook for the men folks on a farm and the wife of the million-

aire, who, though relieved from domestic drudgery, still has the responsibility of "vittles" upon her mind. The chef may be up to date, but the claim of her guests upon her hospitality cannot be relegated to another. And these women fade, grow old, and die just like their country sisters.

To prevent old age one must have wisdom concerning the management of the stomach. If every other necessary thing is attended to and that organ is ignorantly treated, the result will still be decay and death. It would not take long to destroy the best locomotive engine that ever was made if part of its fuel consisted of gravel and coal-dust, with occasional stones and pieces of glass. A certain amount of steam could be generated by means of the proper coal that was furnished it, but smooth and fast running would be out of the question.

Smooth and fast walking, to say nothing of running, is impossible to the obese person. Obesity is the sure precursor of old age. Obesity is heaviness, and heaviness is death. Every human being can cure this

condition. There is no more need of remaining in it than there is of floundering round in a muddy puddle because one, through lack of light, has stumbled into it. One may call the doctor and cry, "See here, I am in this horrid hole and I know not how to get out!" It will not avail. One may sit there till doomsday—doomsday will surely come—and there will be nothing to do except to relax a little more and allow the dirt to cover one entirely.

Our minds are ours to govern our bodies. It is possible to split a great many hairs right here, and declare that mind is all, and that our bodies are crude mind, and so on and on into the deepest and darkest realms of metaphysics. The statement is, however, a true one in the largest sense. Our bodies are exactly what our minds have made them. In so far as our minds are enlightened, our bodies are satisfactory. In so far as our minds are ignorant, our bodies are unsatisfactory.

There is a great deal to undo and more to do in this work of constant rebuilding. But we have all the time there is, and there is no

occasion for hurry, though there is great need of industry and perseverance.

“Man does not live on bread alone, but upon every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.” This is a truth which has never been very clearly understood, but we are just waking up to a knowledge of it. It means that man may be largely fed and nourished by his own divine thought. The failure to understand this has been the cause of much misery.

We must realize our power to direct our own lives. Out of this realization freedom is born. To know that we are the arbiters of our own destinies, and can live in these bodies comfortably, usefully, and as long as we please, is to “arise and shine and give God the glory.”

Old age and death are the colossal lies of the centuries. It is for us at the close of this century to speak the Truth.

## GET UP OR GET OUT!

You've got to get up, or you've got to get out!

You can't lie there in a heap,  
With doctors and nurses poking about,

And bromides to put you to sleep.

You've got to get up in your soul of souls

And realize what you are—

A free-born child of the universe,

Perfection your polar star.

You've got to get up, or you've got to get out!

You can't sit there and boo-hoo,  
Because your friend has gone from your sight,

Or the world has gone back on you.

The law of momentum will carry you down,

When you once start the train that way ;  
But when you reverse, it will carry you up ;

It is only for you to say.

You've got to get up, or you've got to get out !

You can't be saved by your tears,  
Nor by praying to God to ease your pain.

It's been tried for thousands of years—

And the pain is still here, and the tears still flow,

And so they'll continue to do

Until you look into your soul and know

That your God is at home in you.

You've got to get up, or you've got to get out !

And the work is your very own ;

There is no one to hinder and few who can help ;

You're a unit and stand alone.

But the God in yourself is mighty to raise,

When you realize what you are—

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